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A JOURNAL OV ACTIVISM & MAGICK



THE POSSIBILITY OV FINDING SUCH A DOG #3 (SPRING 1991) is compiled by Leigh Blackmore, P.O. Box A281, Sydney South, NSW 2000. Australia. The contents are copyright free as far as I am concerned but considering I lifted nearly everything in here from other sources, that's only my view. Approximately 100 copies of this issue are being produced. Thanks to Kevin Dillon for assistance in locating some of the material herein.

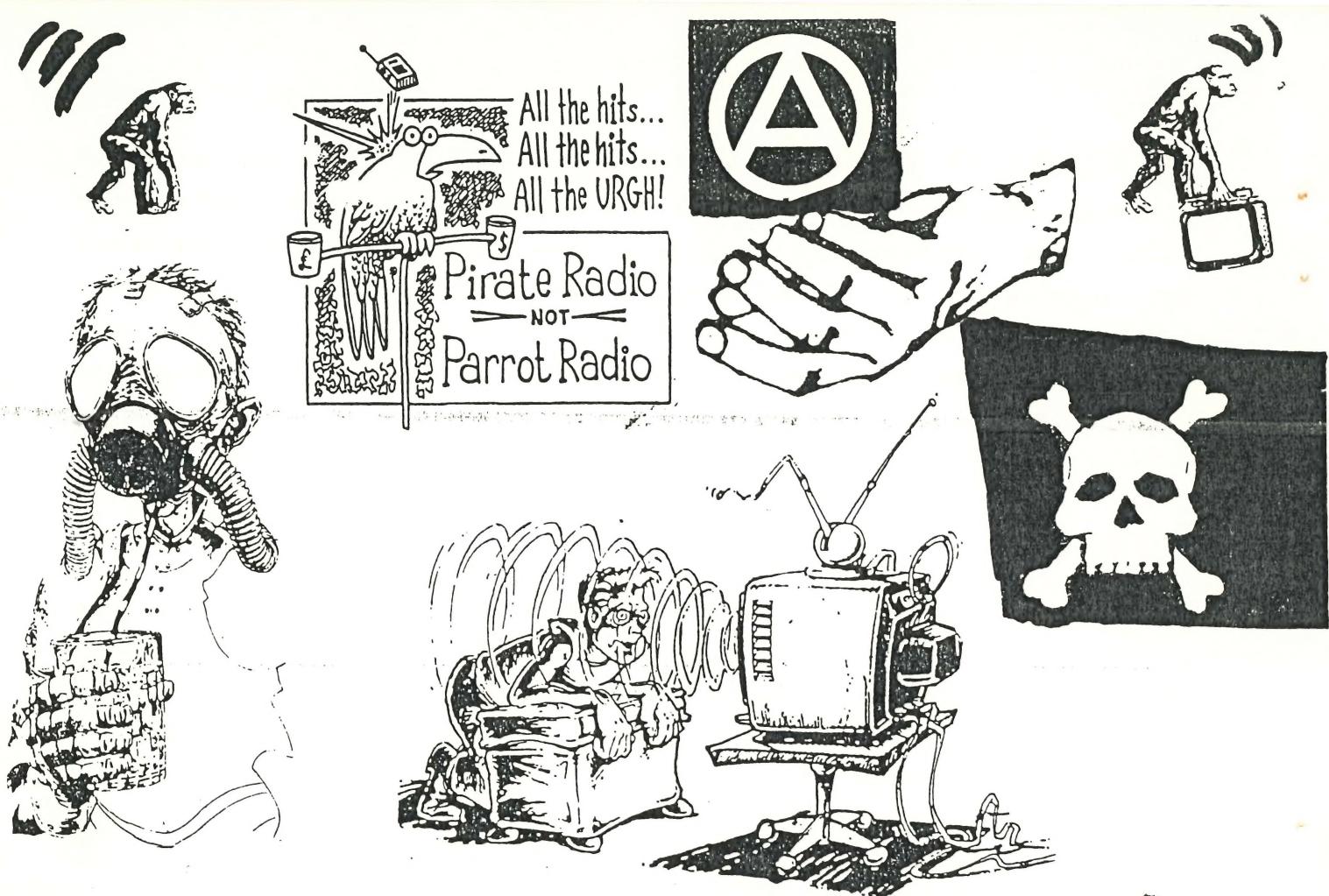
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## EDITORIAL

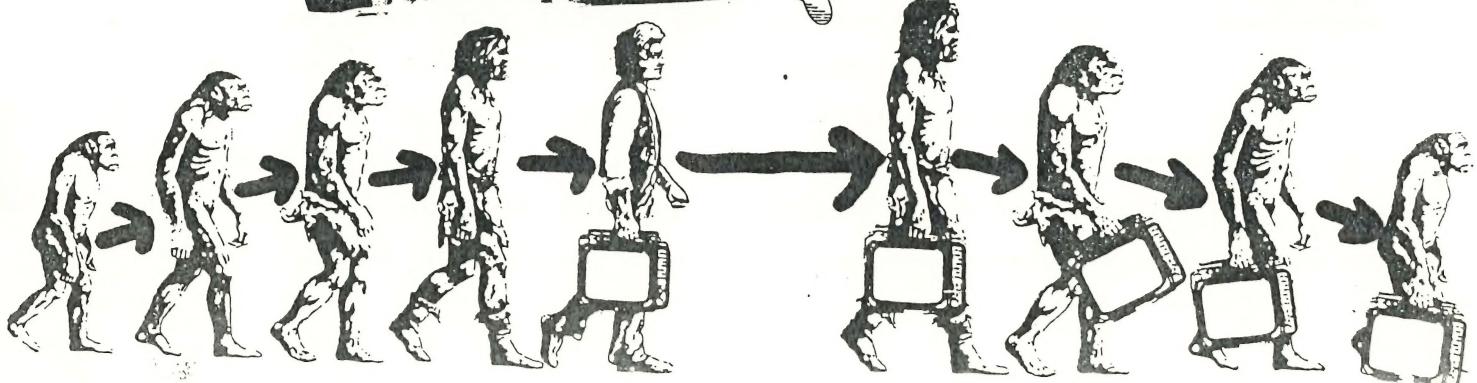
Due to the usual constraints of time I have found myself unable to contribute much original material to this issue, which focuses on censorship issues. However there's still plenty of interesting reading - not all of which accurately reflects my own stance on these issues but what the hey.

What I had planned to talk about here, but now don't have time or space for, was how censorship is one of the main factors contributing to the containment and defusing of radical movements - the process the Situationists referred to as 'recuperation' - that is, the way in which the Spectacle (capitalist consumer-based society) sells back rebellion to its enemies in the form of prepackaged commodities like rock music and T-shirts - a subtle form of censorship, to be true, but a very real one. Maybe I'll talk about this more in a later issue - issues I plan at the moment are on the themes of ART, CONSPIRACY, CONSUMERISM, CRIME, DEATH, DREAMING, DRUGS, FASCISM, MURDER, MENTAL 'ILLNESS' and SEX. At the current rate of production, that should take me about the next ten years or so to get through...

I'd like to give a big plug here for JURA BOOKS, the anarchist bookshop which can be found at 110 CRYSTAL ST, PETERSHAM, NSW 2049 (Phone: 550.9931). It's a place full of useful books and magazines on fighting the system and making your desires reality. YOU can help support the shop, which is run on a voluntary non-profit basis, by picking up a book or two - and at the same time ARM YOURSELF with extra knowledge to make your world what YOU want it to be. The friendly people at Jura will only be too happy to help you out if you are looking for a particular book...



## Smash Control!



feb 87

# THE REAL FAHRENHEIT 451

## BOOKS

By Marion Long

**B**ecause dozens of books have been pulled from the shelves of public libraries and school-rooms in the past few years, *Omni* asked some famous authors to talk about the wrath of the censor.

**Arthur C. Clarke:** I know that at least two of my books were banned by school boards. My first reaction was bafflement, then hilarity. If their action against me had been effective, however, I would have fought with every weapon at my disposal.

It is easy to blame the increase in censorship activity on the Moral Minority and a lot of crackpots; but there are a lot of very sick things in our society, and many decent people feel very strongly that certain things shouldn't be permitted.

I do feel censorship is justified in certain circumstances, but it becomes very difficult to draw the line. The best thing, I think, is not to censor ideas but to expose them to ridicule. In the long run I believe that education is the only answer. I realize that is taking a wildly idealistic view, but I stand by it.

**Harlan Ellison:** These would-be censors are monsters. And they will always be with us because the two most common things in the universe are hydrogen and stupidity.

Anyone who deludes him or herself into thinking that these people are not the biggest danger we face—on the level of our day-to-day lives—is living in la-la land. We may survive the military-industrial complex—I am convinced we won't have a nuclear war—but we can never survive these people who seek to drive us back into the Dark Ages.

We have to stop fighting them politely. This is one reason why the ERA failed. Women were afraid of looking like bulldykes when Phyllis Schlafly came out in her flouncy dress; so they tried to "out-flounce" her. They stuck a hideous Smurf smile on their faces the way she does and tried to beat her at her own game. And you cannot do that and win. You must battle these people and reduce them through ridicule.

They will never be satisfied. If they are not going after rock music, they are going

after television; if not television, books; if not books, magazines; if not magazines, comic books, for heaven's sake.

There is no protection from these people. They are everywhere, and they can never be satisfied. I suggest that their concerns are not really God, people, or morality: Their aim is power. They like the taste of power, and it is self-regenerating. And if they take writers or musicians or artists or any of us down in the process, that is not their concern. They will always be able to justify it in their mad visions by claiming that we were only the hand tools of the Devil.

**Ray Bradbury:** The roots of this rising desire for censorship are not necessarily political or religious. We've gone too far with certain kinds of films and publications and productions; some of them are simply outrageous, and this provokes reaction, even among liberal people. Two of my daughters have been raped. That doesn't make me feel very liberal about certain kinds of people in society, does it? A lot of this "censorship" feeling is not so much about censorship at all, really, so

much as it is a reaction to the failure of our judges and criminal system to promote some sort of fairness about victims and criminals. So you get a reaction about all sorts of crime, and you get an overreaction to pornography. I don't think pornography has a thing to do with anyone raping anyone; in fact, if anything, it should serve as a release for sexual desire.

I can hardly think of any circumstances in which censorship is justifiable. You don't mess around with children. But you think about censoring only in extremely rare sorts of circumstances because censorship is a disease that spreads. If you start censoring pornography, the next thing to be censored will be certain political books, and then certain religious books, and then certain aesthetic books. Just 20 years ago in Red China they burned virtually all the books and half the librarians, too. Tens of thousands of books were destroyed, and thousands of teachers were killed. And we forget all about things like that and about how lucky we are.

**Jean M. Auel:** Attempts have been made to censor both *The Clan of the Cave Bear* and *The Valley of Horses*. Recently I got a letter from the librarian of the public library in Dastrop, Texas, saying there were three people who had come to the library who said they were from the Moral Majority and wanted *The Valley of Horses* pulled off the shelves because there was nothing in it of value, and besides that, there were "a few passages of prurient interest." The librarian went on to say that there were already 18 people who had signed a petition to ban my next book, *The Mammoth Hunters*, which had not yet even been published.

I took the time to write a long, careful, comprehensive letter to the people involved in the Dastrop situation. I included three or four letters I'd received from readers. These were people—one of them was eighty-four years old—who loved reading and who mentioned that they were unable to afford to buy books and had to get them from the library. I wanted to make the point that this is the kind of person they are really depriving. ☐



What you don't know can hurt you.

## What we can, what we can't. Should we or shouldn't we ? Would we if we could? Mr Younis expands ...

Censorship occurs when freedom of speech, printed matter or any other form of communication is impeded, stifled or outlawed by an empowered delegate power. Censorship in its many varied forms has become a divisive factor in Australia. No longer complacent with ideologically-sound morality *per se*, guarding other people's moral conduct has become a national pastime (some say disease). But we have yet to consciously mimic the totalitarian alarmwires triggered off by Hitler's burning of the books, or the medieval Inquisition forcing Galileo to impudently retract his revolutionary and heretical theory that the Earth revolved around the sun.

Censorship remains the most patently absurd and unnecessary means of restricting human freedom. The fanatically censorial ultra-conservatives and uninhibited moral supervisors such as England's Mary Whitehouse (who makes the Fred Nile milieu look like embryonic angels) epitomise the insistent censorship fiasco. Apropos the usually incompetent religious zealot brigades who under the assumed identity of moral protectionists revel in obscurantism which fosters collective submission and creative, artistic and intellectual atrophy. Film censorship is perhaps at the forefront of this perpetual debate.

The Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFCL) was inaugurated in 1988 to amalgamate the Film Censorship Board (FCB). The Chief Censor is the Head of the Office. The Films Board of Review (FBR) is a part-time independent statutory body chaired by *The Australian* film critic Evan Williams, and is administratively supported by the Office.

All three organisations undertake to; examine imported films to determine whether or not to register it for public exhibition; to classify film, videotape and publications on behalf of the States/Territories; and the investigation of the aforesaid referred by the Australian Customs Service under the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations and the police for possible prosecution under State/Territory legislation.

Films which, in the opinion of either Board, are: blasphemous, indecent or obscene; likely to be injurious to morality, or to encourage or incite to crime; and undesirable in the public interest shall be refused registration. Persons aggrieved by the FCB decisions may apply to the FBR for a review of those decisions.

Decisions are taken having regard to the censorship policies of both major Australian political parties that individuals have the right to see, read and hear what they wish provided they, and minors in their care, are not exposed to unsolicited material which may be offensive or, in the case of minors, harmful; their responsibility to reflect current community standards while recognising the difficulty of ascertaining those standards in a pluralist society containing diffuse groups holding often widely divergent views, values and attitudes; and regard shall be had to the general character of an item and any literary, artistic or educational merit it may possess.

This inadvertently leads us to the crux of the schism. The much-vaunted term 'gratuitous' is meant to refer to something unwarranted, unnecessary or motiveless. Despite the persuasive rhetoric of the moral crusaders' clamorous and presumptuous (unproven) persistence that censorship is salvation, the generalised assertion that there exists a broad consensus on matters relating to contemporary 'community standards' or 'gratuitous' is not only grossly ludicrous but moronic. How does one define that equally bandied phrase of 'a tendency to deprave and corrupt'? The internal processes of censorship are anything but clearly revealed, 'self-executive' or free from conceptual doubts. Even our residing judges are imminently vulnerable to the imposition of personal viewpoints in forming suitable legislation.

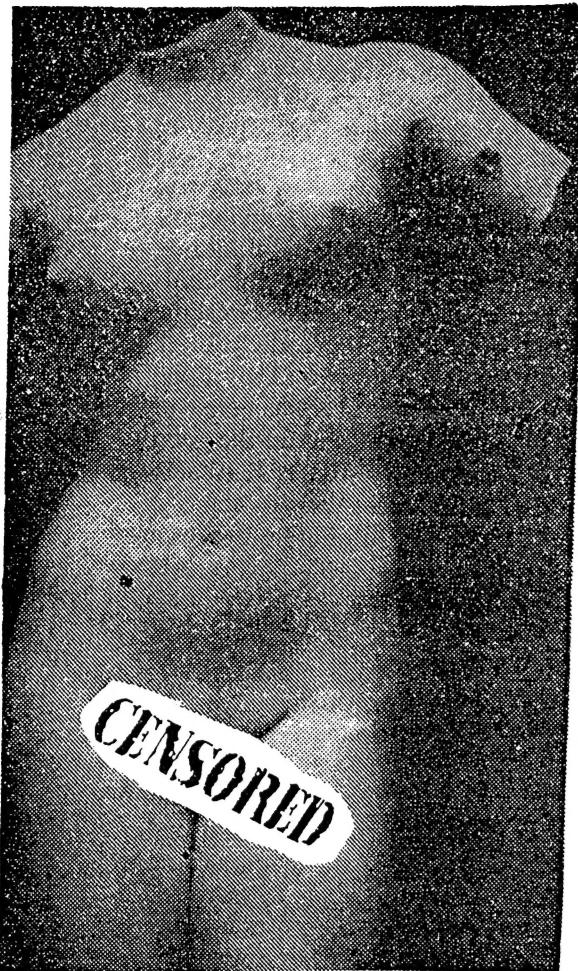
But what of our own lack of understanding and ignorance? Censorship – believe it or not – occurs furtively though not extensively in Australia. It is incredibly ironic – to say the least – that our moderately conservative governments (specifically Queensland) who never cease to remind us (quite rightly) of the heritage of Western freedom, not forgetting the many virtues of *laissez-faire* capitalism, should be seen to encourage the conspicuous denial of both.

Complaints of revulsion/squeamishness are not enough to persuade banning (ie. of films). Explicit surgery endows similar reactions but would we restrict it or other people's rights to see and know what is happening to them? The pro-censorship lobby's hypocrisy even moves exponentially. The visceral shockers of the horror genre, packed with anaesthetising longeurs containing nonsensical and utterly implausible eviscerations, slaughters and amputations, all presumably borrowed from grateful butcher's and abattoir's and masqueraded not too convincingly as human entrails, are targetted. Not content with their threatening idiocy, they categorically refuse the availability of such material, but like many good Christians, devour meat in their everyday diets! In effect they are stating that it is not morally obscene to have animals killed, but it is morally obscene to watch animals being killed!!

Naturally there are very strong and reasonable arguments for protecting children but that responsibility belongs to parents using their own guidelines, and not those of a centralised bureaucratic authority wielding the blind scissors of general decree.

Obviously pornography and violence are quickly stigmatised. The Australian academic, writer and most vocal anti-censorship spokesperson, Wendy Bacon, has conflatedly summarised this basic predicament of free expression vs protection. She has argued that "to protect against the circulation of pornography on the grounds of the liberty of those who oppose it, seems another fancy way of demanding that the interest of those who oppose pornography be pursued, at the expense of the freedom of those affected by prohibition... I, for example, regard the anti-woman and sadistic aspects of much sexual material as a reflection of an authoritarian sexual structure which I oppose, but I do not demand that because of my opposition, the material be censored."

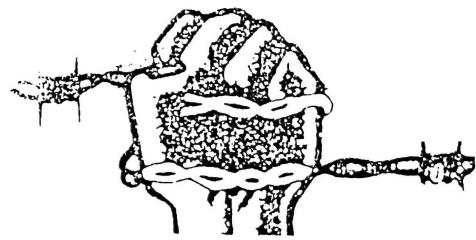
Sense or censorship



The *National Committee on Violence* similarly concluded in its 1990 report with the following: "... that a state of physiological arousal which may be induced by these and a variety of other stimuli can in turn facilitate aggression by *some* (my emphasis) individuals... this does not, of itself, justify the prohibition of any stimulus with a tendency to evoke arousal, sexual or otherwise."

In this age of New Age narcissism, even militant feminists now slightly shy away from the cataclysmic epicentre of the inflating debate. A recent article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (April 21, 1990) highlighted the current growth denomination in the pornography industry: Feminist Erotica/Pornography, long considered an oxymoron for women's groups. In the \$20 million per annum X-rated industry, women are now challenging the once solely patriarchal foundations by running these mail-orders. Not of course that I am not advocating pornography, but merely bringing to light the quandary's faced by minority sects.

But the gargantuan myths thrust upon laypeople (not dissimilar to the conscience-ridden abortion dialectic) have elliptically embedded the gullible. Certainly Chief Censor John Dickie has a lot to contemplate. Contrary to the pro-censors flights-of-fancy, Morgan Gallup Polls and surveys commissioned by the *Adult Video Industry Association* (AVIA) in Canberra repeatedly tell us that nationwide, the majority of those polled were in favour of X-rated videos solely due to the freedom of speech corollary and not, as some would have it, because of the nature of the celluloid.



Indeed there is much to detest in Western civilisation such as the exploitation, manipulation and objectifying of humans, notably women. Moreover, if these vociferous cultural tyrants denounce treatment of women and children as male fantasy sex dolls/playthings (and I readily admit that this occurs), they should also look extremely critically and deeper at our cherished institutions of marriage, career/work status, family, religion, the bible *et al*. The cause rather than the intermediary means is the essence here.

The major misunderstanding deals with the R and X-rated categories. The Restricted (R-rated) classification allows: virtually no restriction on language; realistically implied or simulated sexual activity, and intercourse (depictions of sexual violence acceptable only if necessary to the narrative and not exploitative); highly realistic and explicit violence may be shown, but not if unduly detailed, relished or cruel; and drug abuse is allowed, but not in an advocacy manner.

The Non-Violent Erotica (X-rated) category is just that. "No depiction of sexual violence, coercion or non-consent of any kind is permitted ... this classification includes explicit depictions of sexual acts between *consenting* (emphasis mine) adults and mild non-violent fetishes." (FCB & FBR Reports on Activities 1987) It would appear therefore that this category is far more innocuous than its R-rated counterpart.

Censorship, especially the kind that forbids and outlaws works of the human mind *in toto* is a product of fear and a prelude to societal control. Under our oppressors, we might as well tear apart the whole canon of work by the great West German homosexual director, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, as well as Bunuel's and Pasolini's catalogue. To elevate society with moral virtue, beauty and uncontroversial healthiness while suppressing its violence, ugliness and unsanitary facades is as meaningless as a doctor trying to cure a disease by denying it exists! There are those that believe that this rolicking campaign will deservedly do everyone a favour by efficiently cleansing away a lot of the sexual deviancy and blood-drenched crap from video shelves and cinemas (and I'm the first to agree that much of it is crap) but this tedious process will venture into an alarmingly indiscriminate position. Censorship is neither salvation nor the answer.

Danny J. Younis  
Acknowledgement: *Freedom & Censorship in the Media*, Matthew Barker (1984)

HONI SOIT

Good Weekend 26/11/88

**PAUL SHEEHAN**

# Jason's deadliest sequel

JASON HAS gone too far. He first appeared some 10 years ago, in the teenage horror movie, *Friday the 13th*, wearing a white hockey goalie's mask and stabbing and decapitating teenagers on Halloween night. Jason was a big hit. *Friday the 13th* became a teen horror classic.

So successful was the Jason formula that, despite being apparently killed off several times, Jason kept coming back from the dead in sequels.

We are now up to *Friday the 13th Part Five*, or is it *Six*?

Like all successful formulas, there are clones, such as the "Halloween" series, in which the leading protagonist also wears a death mask while he kills and mutilates teenagers. And he, too, keeps being resurrected for sequels.

*Halloween Four* was the top-grossing movie in America over the Halloween weekend, October 28 to 30, even though, like every previous *Halloween* and all the *Friday the 13th* movies, it was ridiculed by the critics. "As usual," wrote *The Washington Post* reviewer, "people stumble blindly toward the camera, as if they can't see the film crew, or the lurking killer. There's even a chiller ending that promises the ultimate nightmare — more sequels."

Ha-ha. These mask-wearing killers are high camp now, especially Jason in his hockey mask. The maiming and killing is all a joke. But in a country like America, where movies imitate life imitating movies, a few people wearing Jason hockey masks have crossed the invisible line that separates violent escapism from brutal realities.

On Halloween night in Washington last month, a 17-year-old black youth, Kevin Curtis-Bates, was shot to death while sitting on a railing outside a neighbourhood grocery store. The killer was wearing a white hockey mask, an item which has been popular at Halloween in recent years.

The previous week, in Massachusetts, police found a more direct and brutal link with the Jason character. An 18-year-old university student, Sharon Gregory, was found mutilated and stabbed to death.

Police soon began a search for a 19-year-old local, Mark Branch, who they discovered had become fixated by the Jason character. Branch went into hiding and at the time of writing was the subject of a manhunt.

A real-life Jason was probably inevitable. America is a society where the division between fantasy and reality

**A**merica is a society where the division between fantasy and reality is blurred.



is often blurred. Life is a sitcom, or a drama. The screen is the ultimate reality. It has also become a society inured to violence. Graphic, high-tech and frequent, violence has become the dominant characteristic of the middle-brow American action drama.

Violence has even become witty. Arnold Schwarzenegger, another wildly successful one-man formula, almost always wisecracks while killing. With several thousand drug-related homicides each year, murder isn't even shocking any more, unless you're right there when it happens.

Even then, it doesn't seem to register with many young people. Last month, when two young blacks were gunned down outside the Chapter III nightclub in Washington, the television crews which arrived were surrounded by young people smiling and mugging for the camera, just metres from the bodies of the slain youths. Perhaps they thought it was just another show.

As Betty Curtis-Bates, the mother of the young Washington man killed by the gunman in the Jason mask, said after her son's death: "These kids don't even seem to care about all the killing."

These kids, like the millions who

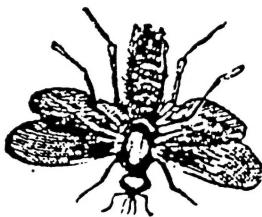
scream and laugh at *Friday the 13th* and *Halloween* and the legion of killer flicks, are not easily shocked any more. And for the violently unstable, horror on the screen can serve as stimulus, not release.

This is not mere prurient alarmism. If the recent "Jason" murders were merely two wild aberrations in a nation of 250 million, writing about them would just be an excuse for a good horror story. But the Jason killings are a window to a wider and worsening issue: the relationship between screen violence and street violence, between freedom of expression and freedom of excess.

If society tolerates, even rewards, a high level of violence in its dominant entertainment medium, then it also tolerates moral casualness and creative cynicism. At what point does the level of violence reach surfeit?

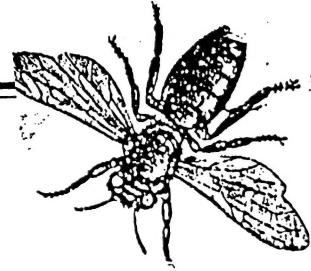
If a country begins to suffer, however indirectly, from glib violence on film and television, then it has reached the surfeit point. Judging from innumerable instances in America, and Australia, and judging from numerous behavioural studies, that point has been reached. It's time for society to react.

Jason isn't funny any more. He's carcinogenic. □



# WEST WATCH

BY LISA SEE



## In Praise of Banned Books

On a quintessential Southern California fall day, motorists caravan north along the Pacific Coast Highway, turn right at Cross Creek Road in Malibu, rev their engines across the creek, hand their cars over to valets and wander into Hazard Ranch—acres of manicured lawn, palm trees and sycamores with leaves turning in the golden hues of the season. People mill about, sampling finger sandwiches, nibbling scones, sipping Earl Grey, lemonade or wine. This is a Freedom to Read Celebration Tea.

Author and futurist Harlan Ellison calls the guests together for what will be a series of readings. "You are here because you are standing in front of darkness. I know I'm speaking to the converted, but we are all that stands between writers and the darkness."

Throughout the rest of the afternoon, celebrity speakers—actors and writers—take their turn at the podium and read from 20 banned books. It doesn't get too depressing or too sad, because Casey Casem, deejay extraordinaire, is on hand to give the afternoon an added twist. This isn't just another banned books reading celebrating Banned Books Week. This is a Top 20 Banned Books Countdown!

Dana Delany, who just won an Emmy for *China Beach*, reads from *The Wizard of Oz*. Ali MacGraw reads from *Goodbye, Columbus*. Tom Poston gives a hilarious rendition of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Esther Rolle knocks the socks off everyone with her interpretation of *A Raisin in the Sun*. The celebrity writers take their turns: Amy Tan recalls *Jane Eyre* as her favorite book growing up, John Steinbeck IV reads from his father's *The Grapes of Wrath*, biographer A. Scott Berg conjures up pre-Revolutionary America with the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, Carolyn See brings Emma to life in *Madame Bovary*.

### Writers, Booksellers Unite

The Freedom to Read Celebration, sponsored by PEN Center USA West, acted as the kickoff event for a week-long series of readings that

took place all across Los Angeles during Banned Books Week. PEN worked in conjunction with the SCBA to set up readings at 13 member stores. The collaboration marks not only what the Los Angeles publishing community hopes will be one of many between PEN and the SCBA, but also the first major move in years to make the SCBA a more effective and visible regional organization. "Let's hope that this is a starting point for the SCBA," says Gwen Feldman, new president of the SCBA and buyer at Samuel French Theatre and Film Bookshop. "Maybe this week can show us that we can actually communicate with other stores."

Robert E. Lee and Jerome Lawrence highlighted a midweek afternoon event at Samuel French. The playwrights read from their two award-winning plays, *Inherit the Wind* and *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*. Both plays, the writers told the audience, have been "banned all over the place," but that doesn't stop them from being produced. Most recently, *Inherit the Wind*, which is published in 34 languages, was banned in Israel, where a troupe was trying to put together a joint Israeli/Palestinian production. In Hong Kong, a group is doing *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail* in Cantonese to honor the dissenting students of China.

At Pacific Bookstore, David Westheimer read from his own banned book, *Von Ryan's Express*. Asked how he felt about being banned, he answered, "It's great. I just wish they'd done it when it was still in print."

While attendance at the events during the week was never more than 25, Adri Butler, owner of Pacific Books, said, "Censorship may not be happening here, but it is in other parts of the country. The SCBA formed a censorship committee after the Rushdie affair. We've learned that it's hard to be effective if you don't have people in place."

At Dutton's Books—Brentwood, owner Doug Dutton's son read from *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. Dutton's teenage daughter and two of her friends read from *The American Heritage Dictionary*. Af-

ter a few more readings, the Carma Bums (a group of poets led by Scott Wannberg, a Dutton employee) stepped into the fray and performed a "word dance" culled from *The Ox-Bow Incident*, *Catch-22*, Faulkner's *Mosquitos*, *The Song of Solomon* and *The Age of Reason*. Diane Huffman, who organized the event, said that the reading was a "mild and gentle and sweet way of protesting any books banned in this country."

The University of Southern California used Banned Books Week as part of the grand opening of its new, three-story, \$8.8 million bookstore (now the largest in Southern California, both in terms of square footage and titles). The staff wore specially made T-shirts that listed banned book titles. College kids went wild when they saw them and the staff has ordered more T-shirts to sell in the store.

Candace Moreno, the trade book department manager, and Josy Catoggio, the trade buyer, organized four readings that took place during consecutive lunch hours. Twenty or so students and a few laborers listened as poet Austen Strauss read from Nazim Hikmet's *Things I Didn't Know I Loved*. Strauss chose to read Hikmet, because "he has spent his whole life in a Turkish jail just for his words, while the other books have been banned by people with small minds who are upset over a few words or passages." John Rechy read from Henry Miller, but substituted "Jesse Helms" for every dirty word.

In addition to the readings, Moreno and Catoggio set up—under a gigantic banner proclaiming "Banned Books Sold Here"—a 25-foot display of banned books with umbrella cards describing why each book had been banned. Students browsed along the display, some taking notes, some taking advantage of the "buy five banned books, get one free" offer.

Holt rep and SCBA board member Tom McFadden acted as the liaison between the two organizations. "We'll all do 100% better next year. We'll start working way in advance, contact the writers directly, and do more publicity." □

## FOR GOODNESS SAKE?

## FORUM

By Howard Wornom

George Orwell's novel 1984 opens with "It was a bright cold day in April and the clocks were striking thirteen," implying something is terribly wrong with the world.

Far too many Americans believe that the censorship described in 1984 could not exist under the vigilant eye of the First Amendment. But it does happen. Our right to free speech was assaulted in two highly publicized cases this year.

In July North Carolina senator Jesse Helms became incensed over works of art that were partially funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Two institutions split a \$45,000 grant for exhibitions of photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe and Andre Serrano. Helms took offense at Mapplethorpe's highly erotic imagery and Serrano's postsurrealist photo of a plastic crucifix inside a jar of urine. Because of the senator's assault, the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, DC, canceled the show. Helms proposed a bill that would deny NEA funds to "promote, disseminate, or produce" works of art deemed "obscene or indecent," especially works of art that insult "the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or nonreligion."

By October, House-Senate negotiators diluted Helms's bill, agreeing to ban federal funds for art devoid of "serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value," dropping the word *indecent*.

In June, prompted by Joe Johnson's 1984 flag torching as a demonstration against government policy, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that burning the American flag "could be a protected form of free speech." This prompted President Bush to propose a constitutional amendment banning the desecration of the flag, neatly trampling the rights of Americans to show dissatisfaction with their country.

On October 5 the U.S. Senate overwhelmingly approved a bill that would ban the defacement of American flags. Senator Bob Dole's original bill, applied only to *public* defacement of the flag; the Democrats' amendment would

make it illegal to "physically defile" the flag at all.

According to *USA Today*, under Chicago's flag-desecration law, approved in March, the city is presently suing ten artists who want to display artworks that incorporate the flag.

Such a broad guideline as this could cause the banning of many works of art: Jasper Johns's *Three Flags*, Norman Rockwell's paintings, and the Iwo Jima memorial. And even the film *Patton* could be banned for the scene with George C. Scott standing onstage with a huge flag backdrop.

Over the past few years the efforts of vocal individuals and small groups—at times backed by such Christian political action groups as Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum; National Legal Foundation, founded by Pat Robertson; and Citizens for Excellence in Education—have assailed the works of Stephen King as "obscene," "harmful, profane, and sexually objectionable," and "a bunch of garbage." They disapprove of novels that reflect contemporary human

values; they abhor science fiction, fantasy and horror because such books supposedly influence youth by insulting Christianity and promoting occult activity. The aspiring censors feel threatened by these literary genres: They're not real, but the Bible is. The logical step is to try to get these books removed from the shelves of public and school libraries.

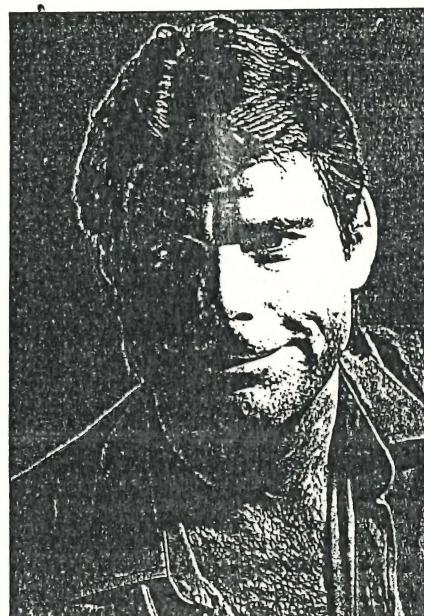
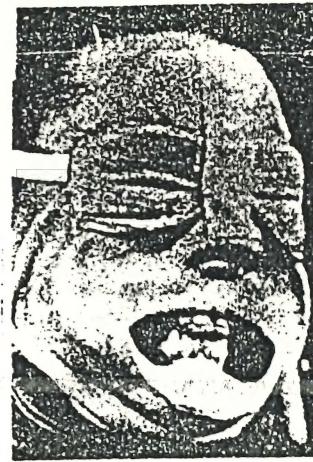
So far most attempts to retract First Amendment rights have been unsuccessful. But certain people will always rally against the use of a word or phrase. Even worse, they'll try to censor content on the basis of inappropriateness or obscenity. It's a disturbing belief of the uninformed that words—the expression of the imagination—are dangerous and inflammatory and must be controlled for the sake of the children.

In America the clocks are striking thirteen for all forms of expression. And one of America's best-selling authors, King, has heard the bells toll for him.

To righteous conservatives, King's popularity implies that he has an undue influence on children—his tales of supernatural evil and rites of passage can be considered works of secular humanism and satanic influences, no matter that they're ultimately tales of moral justice and human experience.

Censors can't do much about public libraries, but libraries in public schools are a different matter. The religious right sees "public education as a vehicle for ensuring conformity with a particular ideology," according to a 1987-88 report on censorship in public schools. This report, *Attacks on the Freedom to Learn*, compiled by Norman Lear's group People for the American Way, further states that the "politically conservative" view "critical thinking as dangerous because it could undermine parental and scriptural authority."

With those guidelines, it's no wonder Stephen King came in third of the five most censored authors on the '87-'88 list. (Judy Blume was number one, and John Steinbeck number two.) But a banned list can be a source of pride. "I'm very proud. . . . I'm in the company



Reign of terror: Should King be censored?

of greats . . . J. D. Salinger and John Updike," states King, who has been challenged ever since the publication of his first book.

In 1975 *Carrie* was attacked as "trash" at Clark High School in Las Vegas; three years later, the Vergennes (Vermont) High School library stacked it on a closed shelf, which requires parents' withdrawal permission, after complaints that it could harm students, particularly young girls.

At a Waukesha, Wisconsin, school district hearing in 1982, Charles S. Gerhart demanded that *The Stand* be removed because its "gutter language" was inappropriate for children under the age of sixteen. Student Paul Stilwell argued against Gerhart. "Almost everyone I know uses violent language, and I always hear about sex at school and violence on television," said Stilwell. "I'm reading a lot more because of Stephen King's books. That's how I started reading, and I hope others may." Of 22 people present at the hearing, Gerhart's was the only complaint. The novel remained on the shelf.

In 1983 Jerome Brose, a junior-high-school teacher, and his wife demanded that *The Shining* be banned in district libraries in Campbell County, Wyoming, due to its "violence, reference to demonic possession, and its ridicule of religious beliefs." The county refused. Brose later asked the school board to reconsider because the novel was filled with "profanity . . . to the point of being smut." The book was removed from junior-high-school libraries.

In 1985 the Bradford, New York, school board took *Cujo* off the library shelf after a five-minute discussion. Passages were premarked for the board's review, emphasizing a masturbation scene. Board member Henry Bonarski said, "We didn't read the entire book, but there was no need to. We wanted it removed because it was a bunch of garbage."

In Washington County, Alabama, the board of education banned *Christine* and *Cujo* from all county school libraries because the books contained "unacceptable language and are pornographic." School librarian Eutoria Toole was ignored when she defended *Christine*: "I read this book, and I believe the plot overshadows the language." Parents also asked for a ban on all of King's books.

*The Shining* was challenged in Vancouver, Washington, in 1986. Karen Venema, a reading aide, charged that the book's "descriptive foul language" made it unsuitable for teenagers. "Students are disciplined for using the same words at school that are found in the novel. We are teaching confusion." One board member even "counted the cuss words," according to the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom*, finding that "22 different" expletives

were used '156 times.' The result: The book was removed from junior-high-school libraries.

On Halloween that year, Roland Floor, a middle-school teacher in Lilly, Pennsylvania, showed the movie *Carrie* to his class as a reward for good attendance and performance. Russell Strange, the school superintendent, complained that educational materials must reflect contemporary community standards, concluding, "I think the majority of us think [Carrie] would go against community standards." Floor was suspended indefinitely with pay.

In February 1987 the Iowa School District removed six books from the West Lyon Community School. "They don't meet the standards of our district," claimed superintendent Frank Ashmore. Following a complaint from a parent, he and principal James Van Steenwick reviewed the *Bachman Books* (novels written under King's pseudonym), then

● *Stephen King came in third of the five most censored authors. But a banned list can be a source of pride. "I'm very proud," said King, "I'm in the company of greats . . .*

*J. D. Salinger and John Updike.* ●

"glanced through" *Carrie*, *The Dead Zone*, *Different Seasons*, and *Night Shift* before removing them all. "I was shocked when I saw some of the words. That kind of thing doesn't have to be among our high-school library books," Van Steenwick said.

The Hampshire Regional High School Library in Westhampton, Massachusetts, had experienced a rash of "theme-related thefts" for more than a year, resulting in the disappearance of more than 70 books. Librarian Kenneth Doerpholz believes that "somebody seems to feel there should be no access to these subjects." By April 1987 about 20 books concentrating on drug education were taken; 34 books that focused on the occult and comparative religions were also stolen. The other 17 were novels by Stephen King.

Since October 1988 there have been no fewer than four attempts to remove seven King books from library shelves: In Green Bay, Wisconsin, an attempt to ban the film *Children of the Corn* and the book *Night Shift* was denied by the school board. Eric and Kitty Larsen

claimed that the film and story *Children of the Corn*, which is anthologized in *Night Shift*, make fun of Christianity and teach students about the occult and rebellion. The case is under appeal.

Paulette Cook, a school librarian in Meriden, Connecticut, removed four King novels from shelves after one parent complained that passages in *Different Seasons* were offensive. Other teachers, as well as school board president John Mantzaris, did not support the librarian's action. "If you're going to define a code of what's offensive," said Mantzaris, "I'm not sure it should be only a librarian who should do this."

James W. Jackson III, a Clearwater, Florida, dentist and self-proclaimed "man of God ordained with authority and responsibility," asked the Pinellas County school system to "stand up for righteousness" and remove *The Shining* from Clearwater High's library. The school board refused.

And *Cujo* was taken from the Berryville (Arkansas) High School library even though a book-review committee, decrying censorship, had previously voted to retain the book. City school officials charged that "the committee had failed in its assigned task" after teacher Darrell Stidham claimed that *Cujo* was "page after page of garbage. My personal opinion is that it's not fit for anyone to read."

America today may aspire to be a kinder, gentler nation, but some Americans despise works that rebel against the norm—a nude on the cover of *Newsweek*, for instance, or a flag on the floor of the Art Institute of Chicago. (The exhibit, held this year, was appropriately titled *What Is the Proper Way to Display a U.S. Flag?*) These people violently oppose easy access to such works because there is no control over who will view them.

Though the tales of Stephen King are almost simplistically humane and moral, his works are prejudged as weird or bizarre simply because King has a commercial reputation for writing horror, and how can tales of terror offer anything of value? Ignored are the important questions: Does the work contain insight into the human condition? Is the work valid? Is it moral?

Censorship is really about fear, the product of narrow minds and limited imaginations. Moral watchdogs claim they're crusading for the common good, for morality, and to protect kids from harmful influences. This lust for control, whether conducted in the name of God or for the children, for the family or for morality, can be more obscene than anything presented in a book or film. No matter how offensive a work may be to any particular group of people, it may, at the same time, offer valid views on human existence that someone somewhere will find of value. □

# Police don't like that word on Triple J

BY LINDSAY SIMPSON  
and PETER HUGHES

The acting news editor of ABC radio's youth network, Triple J FM, has been suspended in continuing controversy over a song called *F... The Police* and its air play on the station. Mr Nick Franklin was informed on Tuesday in a memo from the head of ABC radio, Mr Malcolm Long, that he would be suspended for one week from Wednesday. The memo said in part: "It has become clear in the last two days that renewed debate about the song is being used as an excuse for its ongoing broadcast... the song was being used to intentionally offend sections of the Triple J audience." He directed that because Mr Franklin, employed in his tempo-

rary position for 10 weeks, "chose to ignore a legitimate directive", he would be suspended. Mr Franklin had broadcast a seven-minute documentary dealing with offensive language, and had played 22 seconds of the song *F. The Police*, by the American group Niggers with Attitude, includes the line "beat the police out of shape" and repeats the four-letter expletive about 58 times. It was put on Triple J's hit list about five months ago.

Following the suspension of Mr Franklin, Mr Long sanctioned the playing of the track on ABC Radio National's *Late Night Live* on Wednesday night. He said there was no total ban on the song but that it had to be handled carefully.

## SWEARWORD 1

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and responsibly, and it should be given "a rest".

He excised it from a repeat broadcast of *Late Night Live* at 4.30 pm yesterday, saying it would be inappropriate at that time.

"I'm just proving again that we're not all black and white, that it's not a freedom of speech versus bureaucratic censorship kind of thing... sometimes, exposure of stuff like that is justifiable and sometimes it's not," he said.

Complaints about the song began to snowball recently.

Objections from police in New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia were followed this week by a South Australian MP's call to the Minister for Communications, Mr Beazley, to get it removed from the youth network.

The Liberal leader in South

Australia's Legislative Council, Mr Rob Lucas, said the song was disgracefully offensive and advocated "an aggressively negative and dangerous attitude towards police".

The NSW Police Association secretary, Mr Lloyd Taylor, said the song was "an absolute bloody disgrace".

"People do need rules and regulations, otherwise you have open slather," he said. "You don't go and piddle on the lounge-room floor. That's going out to young people who can easily be influenced."

Triple J defended its playing of the song on Monday as legitimate social commentary on violence on the streets of Los Angeles, includ-

ing police brutality against blacks. Mr Franklin said he decided to air the mini-documentary "on a point of principle".

"I was employed to edit the program," he said. "It appears that management want to interfere with the program. They were telling me to self-censor."

He argued that the song, which had been played by Triple J for the past five months, had been played on his show for only 22 seconds.

The rest of the program dis-

cussed abusive and offensive lan-

guage and interviewed the song's critics, as well as Ms Ooma Nielsen, of the ABC's Standing Committee on spoken English, about the ABC's policy on what could be considered offensive language.

## Swearing gets band the boot

A HEAVY metal band has been booted off stage at the St George Leagues Club for swearing.

Just 15 minutes into its gig on Tuesday night, club management warned the band, Roxus, to curb its use of four-letter words.

After toning down the expletives for several songs, lead singer Juno told the crowd about the management's direction to cut out the swearing.

A spokeswoman for Melodian records, which has signed the band, said this sent the crowd into "a frenzied chanting of the offending word" and they were directing their abuse at the club management.

"Several songs later, the already volatile situation was further inflamed when a girl in the front row of the audience removed her shirt and the band inquired if any other members of the crowd were intending to do likewise," the spokeswoman said.

This was the final straw for the club management. Security men removed the band from the premises.

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## The law's not 2 rapt

★ LOS ANGELES: A senior California law officer has given a clean billing to the controversial rap group 2 Live Crew, whose popular new dance album has been tagged as obscene elsewhere in the US and Canada.

Deputy District Attorney Albert Locher said a review of the band's album, *As Nasty As They Wanna Be*, showed it to be "extraordinarily crude and offensive" — but he said it was not in violation of any Californian State law. Canadian police in Toronto, however, have warned record shop owners they face arrest and heavy fines if they are caught trying to sell the album.

# Obscenity hits the high notes

American law now requires that music buyers be warned about the contents of their purchases — which will please

those troubled by the broadcasting locally of the song "F--- Tha Police" by an American group, Niggers With Attitude. But what about the really pornographic material, asks PETER BLOCH.

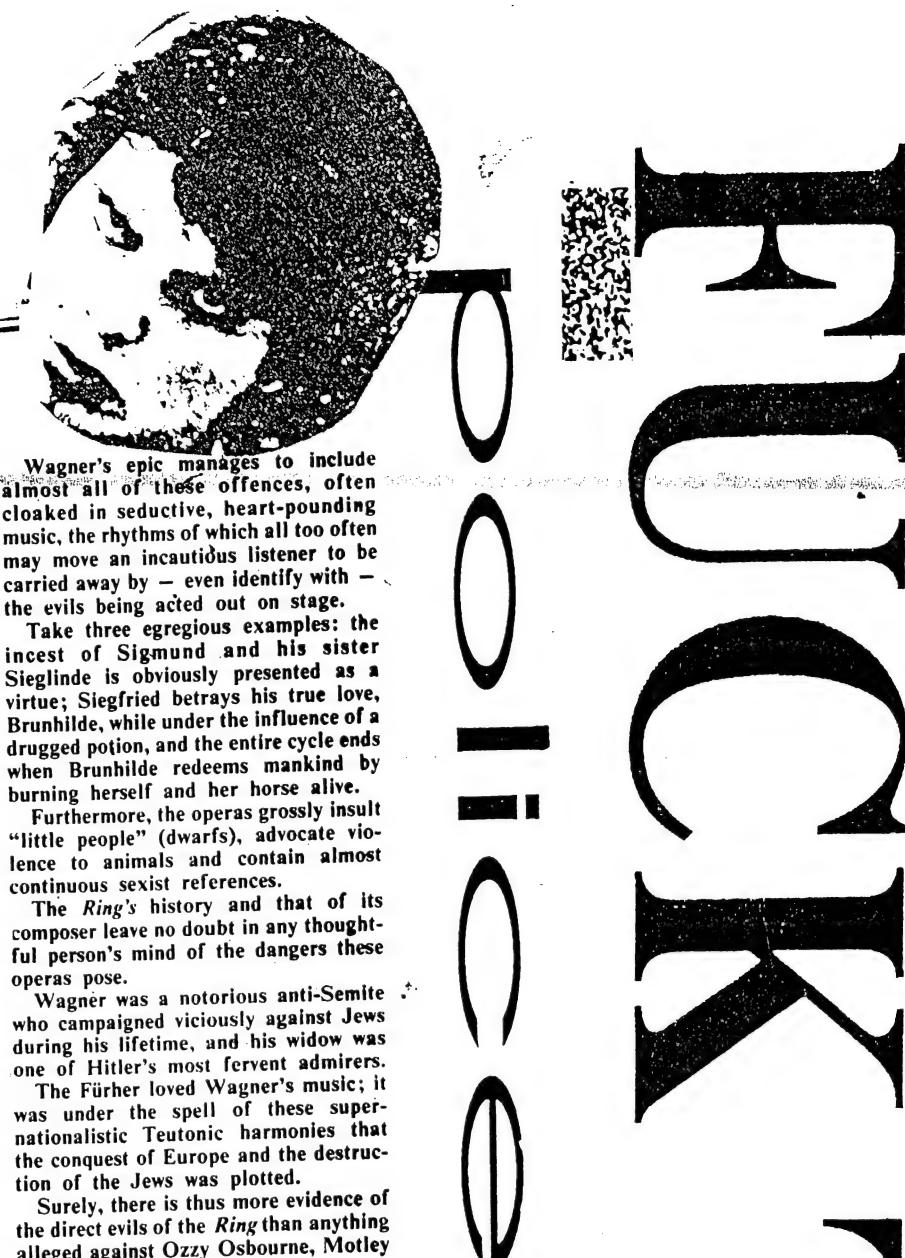
**N**OW that the major US record companies have agreed to stamp warning labels on offensive rock albums, the public should be alerted to an even greater danger that has not been acted on.

Richard Wagner's 16-hour, four-opera *Ring of the Nibelungen*, one of history's most pernicious works of art, may be found in any large record store.

Perused even briefly, it reveals itself to be more objectionable than any rock 'n' roll song at the centre of the labelling controversy.

The *Ring*, now being performed at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, violates just about every modern taboo imaginable. Moreover, history proves it dangerous.

Consider a warning label that was once proposed: "Warning: contains lyrics or matter which describes or advocates one or more of the following: suicide; explicit sexual acts including, but not limited to, rape, sodomy, incest, bestiality and sadomasochism; murder; morbid violence; or the use of illegal drugs."



Wagner's epic manages to include almost all of these offences, often cloaked in seductive, heart-pounding music, the rhythms of which all too often may move an incautious listener to be carried away by — even identify with — the evils being acted out on stage.

Take three egregious examples: the incest of Sigmund and his sister Sieglinde is obviously presented as a virtue; Siegfried betrays his true love, Brunhilde, while under the influence of a drugged potion, and the entire cycle ends when Brunhilde redeems mankind by burning herself and her horse alive.

Furthermore, the operas grossly insult "little people" (dwarfs), advocate violence to animals and contain almost continuous sexist references.

The *Ring*'s history and that of its composer leave no doubt in any thoughtful person's mind of the dangers these operas pose.

Wagner was a notorious anti-Semite who campaigned viciously against Jews during his lifetime, and his widow was one of Hitler's most fervent admirers.

The Führer loved Wagner's music; it was under the spell of these supernationalistic Teutonic harmonies that the conquest of Europe and the destruction of the Jews was plotted.

Surely, there is thus more evidence of the direct evils of the *Ring* than anything alleged against Ozzy Osbourne, Motley Crue or Twisted Sister.

Any offence committed by these relatively innocuous heavy-metal bands pales by comparison with the demonstrated outrages contained in Wagner's masterwork.

And unlike the music of most heavy-metal groups, these objectionable operas will be shown on prime-time television, paid for in part by taxpayers' dollars.

In June, four consecutive evenings will be set aside on public television channels for the *Ring*, with subtitles that guarantee that not one offensive nuance will escape any viewer.

Senator Jesse Helms and the other self-appointed guardians of the public morals have their work cut out for them. The public deserves no less than their eternal vigilance.

*The New York Times*

# thoughtcrimes



# psychick youth

Is JJJ under attack from censorship, editorial controls and internal power play? **BRETT SOLOMON** investigates the recent banning of the song *Fuck The Police* and what it means for the future of JJJ.

1975 saw the conservatives offended over Double J playing the song 'You Just Like Me Cos I'm good in Bed'. Of course, fifteen years later they are still complaining, but this time the song isn't about sex, it's about race, violence and profanity.

The track by the US band *Niggers with Attitude*, 'Fuck the Police' is no ordinary song. Indeed it jumps out of the speakers chanting over fifty 'fucks' while shouting about the slaughtering of police.

"A young nigger on the warpath  
And when I'm finished  
There's gonna be a bloodbath  
Of cops dying in LA"

Shocked? Well, maybe. Should it be censored? ABC management believed it should and banned the song a couple of weeks ago. This led to one of the strongest and "most controversial disputes in Australian radio history" (*Sydney Morning Herald*)

The situation erupted when JJJ ignored the ban on the song and broadcasted 22 seconds of it in a documentary about censorship. What followed was the suspension of the acting editor of news and current affairs, Nick Franklin and culminated in threats by the ABC managing director, David Hill, to take JJJ off the air.

As a result JJJ staff were striking over what seemed to be a change in ABC management's attitudes. According to the union representative for JJJ, Craig Donarski, "the programme making units were always ferociously independent... but since David Hill took over there's been an attempt to win that independence back...". As a result, conservative bureaucrats who have no real radio experience are having greater control over Australia's national youth network.

But this dispute is more than an internal power play. It has been a "perceptions war" over who is seen to be in control of the ABC. As Craig Donarski explains:

"The ABC management... want the public and

the politicians to see that they are the ones in control... David Hill has put on his tin hat and he's standing in the trenches and he's going 'Right, I am in control. I kick heads around here and you do what you're fucking well told'... A great deal of this is to please his political masters..."

As a result, editorial and programming decisions have been made over 'Fuck the Police' in response to people such as the leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Representatives in

South Australia, the Western Australian Police Union and the Reverend Fred Nile. This has put JJJ in a situation where it is forced to be accountable to an audience which they are not funded to represent. Thus they have been prevented from fulfilling their role of presenting international and local urban music.

This was epitomised when JJJ was stopped from playing 'Fuck the Police' in the National Hot 100 on 20th May which played the 100 most voted songs of JJJ listeners. Being the 33rd most popular song (of the 10,000 different songs voted). 'Fuck the Police' was voted by an estimated five or six thousand JJJ listeners nationally. However because of the ban, JJJ was forced to break the contract they made to play the 100 most favourite songs of their listeners. This cut across the station's basic tenets: representation of the youth, democracy and freedom of expression.

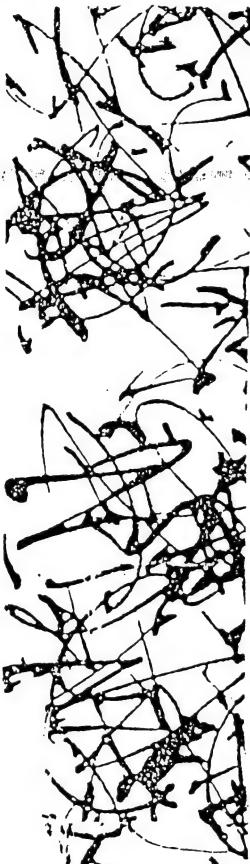
But should JJJ be able to play whatever they wish? Clearly there is some music which is offensive and should be placed in context. For example, out of context 'Fuck the Police' may be seen as a song which purely says "Let's go and kill pigs". However as explained by the DJ (which it usually was) this piece is seen as a response to a specific set of social circumstances. The band, *Niggers with Attitude* come from one of the most violent parts of the US where, according to Icecube, a member of the band, the war on drugs is viewed by many Blacks as a war on Blacks. In this context it is not a call to randomly kill cops nor is it a general commentary about police all over the world but rather the expression of a desperate situation.

Of course a song may be misinterpreted resulting in adverse repercussions, but in the main, people are not incited to indulge in aggressive or abnormal acts because of music. Violence on the radio is not causing gang wars, rape, murder, robbery or drug addiction. Nor does it, as the Reverend John Pastekamp asserts "poison the minds of young people". It is rather society's failings which have already set them in place. (*Bulletin* May 22, 1990). To censor (to hide) these images won't make them go away, rather it will only put off the time when something is actually done about them.

JJJ has prided itself on the fact that it can provide what the commercial stations can't. That is a broader, more challenging spectrum of music and a more diverse range of styles. This necessarily includes music that is somewhat provocative. But the loss of the dispute by the continued banning of the song has set a precedent, and precedents can be dangerous.

So the ABC had better watch out that it doesn't end up moulding the JJJ of tomorrow into the 2 Day of today.

# Clear the docks, porn debate is in full bloom



WASHINGTON, Monday: The azaleas are flowering in Washington and obscenity is in the air. Like a hardy perennial, the Art versus Porn debate is once again in full bloom.

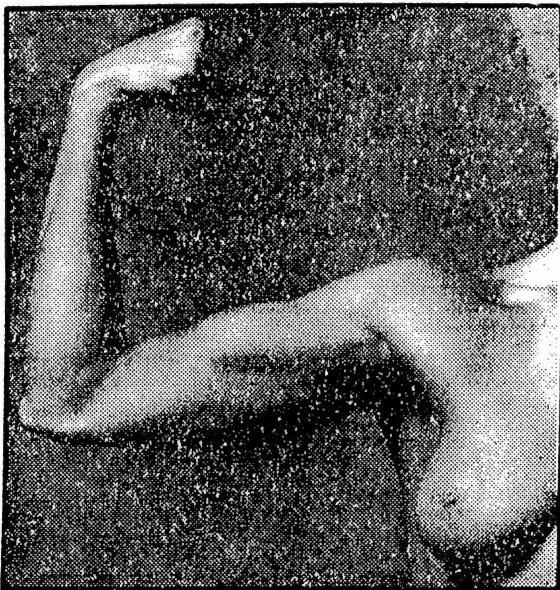
As in the past, the debate is unlikely to settle anything. But the aroma is pungent. At issue this spring is an "art exhibition" featuring naked people, an Ohio man's photo album, mail-order videos and a peep show in St Paul, Minnesota.

"As head of a major theatrical institution, I have always cherished my freedom," wrote Mr Joseph Papp, producer of the New York Shakespeare Festival, in a recent letter to the chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

"To be asked, after meeting the tests of 35 years, to yield to circumscription and legislative prohibitions in the most vulnerable and inexplicable area of the arts, its content, is unthinkable, if not downright subversive."

The language is that of Congress, which enacted this legal "loyalty oath" last October after a row over a Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition of nude photographs.

Mr Papp's language was more explicit. "How am I to decide what others consider obscene?" he demanded.



Mapplethorpe offering ... art or porn?

Mr Papp's complaint was that he, in common with other recipients of federal funds administered by the Endowment, was being asked to promise, in writing, not to produce works containing "depictions of sadomasochism, homo-eroticism, the sexual exploitation of children" or individuals engaged in sex acts and which, when taken as a whole, do not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific merit".

This age-old question is the subject of a court hearing in Cincinnati today.

A judge will decide whether the local Contemporary Arts Museum and its director should be tried on obscenity charges arising from mounting that same Mapplethorpe exposition which was drummed out of Washington's Corcoran Gallery last year.

In another obscenity case, a majority of America's highest justices in the Supreme Court upheld the conviction of an Ohio man who was found to have four "sexually explicit" photographs of a teenage male.

In the past, the court has backed State laws barring the sale and distribution of child pornography. But what it was now saying was that merely possessing a photo which others considered obscene in a private home was a criminal offence.

Justice William Brennan, in a dissenting judgment, said the Ohio

law was an infringement of constitutionally guaranteed freedoms.

With such a precedent, courts would soon be trying family friends for having photographs of children in the bathtub.

Poppycock! boomed George Will, a right-leaning nationally syndicated columnist, yesterday. Justice Brennan was being plain "silly".

Not as silly, perhaps, as officials in St Paul, Minnesota, are feeling.

Last year, as part of their war on porn, they paid \$US1.8 million (\$A2.3 million) to the proprietor of a peep show in compensation for closing down his business.

The deal was that he get out of town. But he did not go far.

Crossing the bridge from St Paul to Minneapolis, on the opposite bank of the Mississippi, he opened up a new, bigger porn theatre.

The Guardian

**RICHARD NEVILLE,**  
enfant terrible at the  
centre of the *Oz*  
obscenity trial in the  
60s, eats his own words  
and argues that many  
films and books today  
are too preoccupied with  
immorality.

**T**HE man is naked and in pain, pummelled by a gang of thugs. Snarling abuse, the ringleader bastes the victim with excrement and globs it into his gob. Dogs bark, onlookers mock and a bejewelled moll surveys the high jinks. The man is then urinated upon and the toughs strut off to a fancy restaurant.

Welcome to the opening of "one of the finest movies to come out of Britain in the last decade", according to Derek Malcolm of the *The Guardian*. "Magnificent."

Soon the woman is being punched in the stomach by her husband, the ringleader. Another diner is kneed in the groin. A child is molested and abducted. A kitchen hand is floored and tortured. More guests are set upon; one of them is soaked in soup and forcibly fed. The wife reappears, embroidered with bruises and another woman is stabbed in the cheek with a fork. By the time the child is savaged for the second time, I flee the cinema, sensing that worse is in store.

The glossy flier brooks no dissent. "A masterpiece of movie invention," headlines a review reprinted in full from Britain's *Financial Times*, which calls it a "sort of Jacobean melodrama gone post-modernist". People who failed to appreciate its "greyhound sleek plot enriched with marrowbone metaphor" were wretched drones in the "Bank of Honourable Stupidity", and stuck with a single-figure IQ. *Blitz* magazine was more succinct. "Sex, murder, cannibalism," it raved. "It's all there and more... quality erotica." Other critics agreed: "breathtaking" ... "dazzling" ... "brilliant" ... "In essence, this new film by Peter Greenaway — *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* — is considered a cornucopia of multiplying subtle resonances, biblical allusions, frozen painterly gestures and mobile revelations..."

As I slunk homewards, a wayward cipher at the Bank of Stupidity, I wondered who was the craziest: the film-maker, his critics, our culture or myself? At the core is a paradox. I am part of a generation that spent its formative years fighting for freedom of expression. We had trials, street demos, an alternative press, pirate radio stations, sit-ins on the David Frost show, the burning of bras and the unbanning of books. An era which began with the liberation of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* ended with canonisation of the Sex Pistols. Only, it's still going, as we shall see.

Perhaps it's because we put so much energy into this defence of freedom that it goes against the grain to pass judgment on anything that is obviously obnoxious, especially if it is deft, daring or unusual. With a tolerant shrug, we move from a Robert Maplethorpe "masterpiece" of a bum-encased bullwhip to a pop video of Alice Cooper on a bed of nails wielding his whip on a steamy nymph. And who dare deride, with the censorship lobby still twitching in the wings?

We live in a post-modernist Valhalla, where negative judgment is considered

passé. And the matter is complicated by the panache and technical wizardry of these dark auteurs. The top prize at this year's Cannes festival went to *Wild at Heart*, a film "laced with torrid sex scenes and stomach-churning violence", according to Reuters. The director, David Lynch, made headlines with *Blue Velvet* (currently saturating the video outlets), a movie which shocks with its mixture of violence and sexual terror and perhaps redeems itself by exposing small-town complacency and corruption. In other words, like so much of today's cultural fare, it is powerful, erotic and nasty. But, in this era of mounting cataclysm, who needs it? Just as the Cannes audience greeted this latest award with a mixture of cheers and boos, I believe it is time for dozing dissenters to come out of the closet.

Everywhere artists are breaking taboos while its victims munch away blankly, as though chewing cud. *London Fields*, the new novel by Martin Amis, is breathtaking in its intelligence. It has verve, imagination, wit and a cold, cold heart. All the major characters are vile, including a baby. The book is un-put-downable, until you put it down. Then you wonder why you've been spending so much time with such murderous creeps. The book's meanness of spirit remains in the brain like a drug, a Largactil of the soul. In a way, we, the cultural consumers, are often lured back as unwitting guests to a macabre, "Greenwayish feast in the company of demented gangsters, witnessing acts of sadistic brutality. Why do we stay, when our very presence is in act of collusion?

"But the music," a friend said, when I quizzed her about the ending of *The Cook, etc.* "Wasn't it wonderful?" I suppose so. Notable, too, were the costumes, the "painterly" colours, the direction, the acting, the mood. But I wanted to know the fate of Alan Howard, the bookish adulterer. His death was so gruesome, she explained, that she would rather not discuss it; anyway, the lover was finally cooked and served for dinner. Yum, yum.

Surely, if life is too short to stuff mushrooms, then it's too short by half to watch people stuffing themselves and then eating their rivals. OK, so we appreciate that the director is gifted, but what is he saying? What is the film's insight into the human condition? When the end credits roll, what is the audience left with? What we are left with is this: a load of the same substance that was smeared on the nude in the beginning, with a difference. Unlike the victim, the audience does not have the benefit of a hosing down.

# THE COOK AND THE THIEF AND HIS WIFE AND HIS LOVER

The Sydney Morning Herald

Saturday, June 2, 1990 75

In art, as in life, this is not the time for nihilism, sadism or spiritual defilement. Most of us are aware that the world is top heavy with gangsters and that barbarity is many-headed. But, with environment disruption facing each human on Earth — some say an imminent cataclysm — the time is urgent for cleansing the atmosphere and ridding the soil and the sea from pollutants and poisons. This also applies to our culture. For as surely as toxic residues kill the fish and the fowl, so the gangrenous sludge of a bastardised intelligentsia kills our spirit. It is renewal and valour that is needed now, honour and optimism, not the sordid excesses of lionised shock addicts.

We must regain our sense of discrimination. Big bucks are now spent on checking and analysing the waterways and rainforests, but who is evaluating the messages of our media? Film stars jump up and down over what's sprayed on the vegies and are cheerfully oblivious to what's spliced on to celluloid. People are concerned with what they put in their mouths and are seemingly indifferent to what they consume with our minds.

Sure, let's clean up the garbage in Antarctica, but what of the garbage in our living rooms? This is not to seek a revival of censorship, imposed from the top, but to renounce our reticence for what it is: a hangover from a long-lost era of uptightness.

Stage, TV, cinema, books and magazines: what is their impact on society, and how do they influence our values and attitudes? Is their message reflec-



Richard Neville in his Oz days.

tive, as so many claim, or can they foster a moral pestilence?

A quarter of a century has passed since I cheered for the right of Lenny Bruce to swear on stage, but does that mean I must lift a finger to help the new breed of foul-mouthed Alf Garnetts to stoke up a hatred for women, gays and minorities? They claim to be satirising bigotry, which is merely a mask for indulging in it.

When you sit around the kitchen table with friends, some of them veterans of bygone "obscenity" battles, they will admit to being deeply perturbed by what they catch their children watching on TV, but are too traumatised by the past to do much about it. Thirty years of libertarianism is not a good grounding for phoning the ABC to complain about the screening of Aztec torture rituals in

the afternoon, never mind the heavy metal on Sunday mornings.

At Easter, I took a friend's child to the Show, where, of course, shopping, shopping, shopping has long crushed the ambience of furs, fruit and feathers. All the desires of this dainty princess focused on three bags: police paraphernalia, army weaponry and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle-killing tools. When the contents were laid out in the living room, it was like a training camp for the Khmer Rouge. Appropriately, the first pair of handcuffs slipped on by this nine-year-old could not be unlocked. Whatever the forces that drove her to convert the nursery into a dungeon, it is time to express serious reservations about the shape of our culture. F--- the thought police, we need *Parents With Attitude*. The critical vacuum isn't working.

It is like watching something die, something more precious than a lake or a mountain stream.

Every day a new example. Perhaps it is a little thing, as can be the case with the start of a terminal illness. The latest fashion on the football field, say, when a player has been tackled. Before he can rise to play the ball, a member of the opposing team will give his face a good grind in the dust. And then put in the boot. Charming. So Jacobean. So post-modernist.

The decline of our sense of fair play ripples through the atmosphere like sitcoms, or exhaust fumes. It can be seen in a fleeting news item, such as the tear-gassing of Palestinian babies, or the sledge-hammering of Redfern or the British poll tax riots ("Our finest hour": Hanif Kureishi). On much of the world stage, where dictators are

dumped and the walls crash down, the picture seems brighter. But at my local video store, just five minutes away from panoramic bushwalks into the wilderness, I see the teenagers stockpiling their weekend tape fare — at least 10 hours of horror, porn and pain.

Dazzled by technique, we ignore the content. In fact, the only content that registers is the technique. Film and video have reached such levels of sophistication that our critical sensibilities are overwhelmed, numbed and inoperative. Alone in a darkened space, we are no match for the boffins from Special FX, the Tinsel Town hype, computer marketing and the whiz-bang reviews. But now that we are finally learning to recycle our trash, what about precycling our entertainment?

Is it life-enhancing or life-degrading? Does it glorify what it pretends to condemn? Is it oriented towards a solution or does it overly magnify and distort the problem, in order to thrill and to titillate and to gild the bottom line? Is it defeatist, ignoble, sadistic, or is it empowering, illuminating, honourable? If these questions sound fuddy-duddy, it shows how far we have drifted from a sense of common purpose and a shared inclination to evolve and have succumbed to the colonisation of our psyches by misfits with brains.

The arts are as much part of our environment as trees and the sunshine.

My wife once asked whether we had to time to build a greenhouse before the whole world became one. Not much, as it turned out. But what about the movie-house effect, that gradual sapping of the spirit and the corruption of communities by stone-hearted shit

merchants? The symbiosis between our mores and our media is hard to deny, and I now believe there is a poetic link with our environmental decline. After all, everything is connected. "At the present accelerating rate of depletion," says *Science* magazine, "the United States will run out of families not long after it runs out of oil."

And just as we're having to adjust our attitude to shopping (no more crap), so we need to adjust our attitude to freedom of expression (no more crap). The great establishment battle to stop *Lady Chatterley's Lover* from being printed in paperback was lost with one question: "Would you allow your servant to read it?"

Quite rightly, the jury rebelled against such proprietorial snobbery, and D.H. Lawrence was left to run amok. There has since followed hundreds of clashes between communicators and authority, usually involving defeat for the censors, which again I applaud. But now is surely the time to devise a way, from the ground up, to stop the rot.

The Jungian psychologist James Hillman, in a wonderful Schumacher Lecture, presented the problem of "psychic numbing" against a background of demonic archetypes and spurned gods, and his conclusion is related to this discussion.

Hillman suggests the "shocking possibility" that the more we shrink away from the world and into our private functions, focusing on to the interior psyche, the more we contribute to the decay of civilisation. "Reawakening the sense of soul in the world," he believes, "goes hand in hand with an aesthetic response — the sense of beauty and ugliness — to each and everything, and this in turn requires trusting the emotions of desire, outrage, fear and shame ... Outrage, in particular, has a social function, responding to moral and aesthetic atrocities, and leading us into the fray ..."

According to a report in the *Herald* (May 15), a dozen children aged between four and eight were recently treated in Cairns hospital for sexually transmitted diseases. They came from the Kowanyama community on Cape York peninsula. In another remote Aboriginal community, men had forced children as young as seven to engage in acts depicted in pornographic videos. Elsewhere, a five-year-old boy suffered internal injuries after older boys had tried to emulate a scene from a video. And when a 10-year-old boy was sexually assaulted, the first question asked by the white police, apparently, was whether he enjoyed it.

The source of this nightmarish report was attributed to a consultant to the Prime Minister's Department, Ms Judy Atkinson, who said that these acts of brutality were increasing with the wider availability of videos. "Because it's on film," she explained, "it must be somehow normal, so it's all right to go out and do it." Exactly. This is an extreme and tragic case of what so many of us are suffering in one degree or another: a loss of our sense of normality. If the VCR at Kowanyama is ever loaded with a tape of *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*, then it's only a matter of time before the first victims are admitted to Cairns hospital.

Coprophilia and cannibalism will have finally have arrived on the mainland, courtesy of one of the finest films to come out of Britain in the last decade.

# Controversy rages over rap band's 'audio pornography'

NEW YORK POSTCARD

DEBORAH CAMERON reports on moves to silence the band 2 Live Crew and its music.

IS it music or "audio pornography"? And is the move to silence the rap band 2 Live Crew legitimate, or the work of whites who are interpreting the music from the other side of the cultural divide?

Whichever way you look at it, *Nasty As They Wanna Be* is not a friendly recording. Two independent dirty word counts on the album have come up with different tallies.

A former disc jockey who now works for a Christian group claims that there are 1,117 explicit descriptions of male and female genitalia and 870 depictions of anal sex on the album. A *Washington Post* journalist totted up 87 references to oral sex and 116 to genitalia. Either way, it's a lot of bad language crammed on to a 50-minute recording.

Most critics of the band say that its music is stridently anti-women and advocates violence against them. The Christian ex-disc jockey Robert DeMoss, who has crusaded against 2 Live Crew on behalf of the California-based organisation Focus on the Family, says that it is not art but "evil from the pit of hell".

Rap music emerged from the black inner-city ghettos about 10 years ago and is now favoured by advertising jingle writers and has influenced pop singers including Madonna.

Although it was initially dominated by males, some of the most successful rappers in the past two years have been women. The heavy drumbeat that is common to all rap has been picked up by white music fans.

Saturday night's *Yo MTV Raps*, an hour-long rap segment on the music video television channel, was devoted to airing rap songs with an anti-street gang and pro-community theme.



2 Live Crew, the band at the centre of the current controversy, has established itself as the bad boys of rap with *Nasty As They Wanna Be* and has been arrested during concerts in Florida, Georgia and Alabama.

A legal battle over whether the band has a right to perform songs from the album resulted last week in a landmark decision by a Federal Court judge in Florida who said that the band's songs were obscene and therefore not protected by the First Amendment, which protects the right to free speech. A Florida sheriff, Nick Navarro, even decreed that people should not play the album on their car radios in his jurisdiction.

But far from being confined to the southern Bible Belt, the controversy has spread to Washington, DC, where some record stores have stopped selling the album in response to county officials who warned that they might take action if it was sold to children.

In New York the recording continues to sell. On the national record charts, *Nasty As They Wanna Be* is at number 46 after spending 38 weeks on the charts and

going platinum in the process. *Clean As They Wanna Be*, a sanitised version of the same album, is not even in the top 50.

Fans of the music, many of them under 16, say that they "just like the beat" and that they don't really listen to the words.

However three 16-year-old girls, who are not fans of the band, describe it as "perverted", "sexist" and "disgusting".

The leader of the band, Luther "Luke Skywalker" Campbell, who has a seven-year-old daughter, denies that his music is anti-women and claims to describe sexual activity that is commonplace.

Campbell, who left a street gang and went on to become a millionaire making rap records, says that his critics are racist.

And some fans agree. A 23-year-old university student at a concert in Georgia last week said that white performers including Madonna, Alice

Cooper, Iggy Pop and Ozzy Osbourne had sung about incest and bestiality in the past and no-one had worried.

"I may not agree with their lyrics but I'm tired of old white men ... telling blacks what they can do."

A 14-year-old girl at the same concert said she did not think that the band's music was provocative.

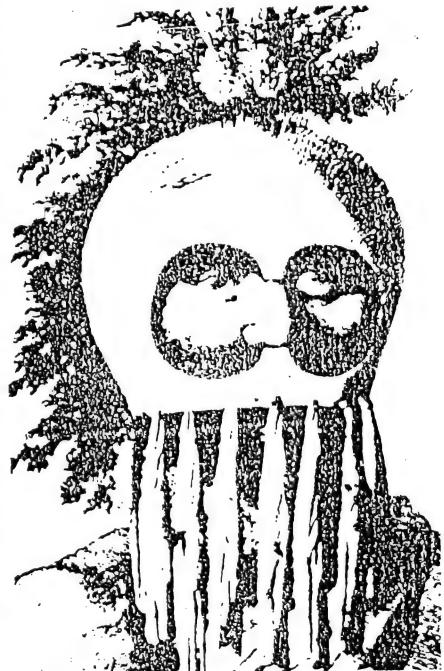
Some music critics argue that *Nasty As They Wanna Be* is a "new art form that presents all sorts of creative possibilities" and others say that hostile reactions to the music smack of racist over-reaction.

However, the president of Morality in Media, Mr Joseph Reilly, told the *New York City Tribune* that those who are saying it is racist are themselves racists.

"The implication seems to be that what's obscene and sexually offensive and sadistic for some communities is a normal lifestyle for the black community."

The Sydney Morning Herald

Tuesday, June 19, 1990 9



# NEWS OF THE WEEK

EDITED BY MADALYNNE REUTER

## Small Firms Claim Printer Censorship Is Growing

Several small publishers are claiming that printers' censorship is on the rise.

The most recent case involves Bay Press of Seattle, which charges that Arcata Graphics refused to print *AIDS Demo Graphics* because it was "too sensitive."

Described as "part history, part guidebook, part polemic," the book by Douglas Crimp and Adam Rolston is the first to document the activities of AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP), Bay Press says. Acknowledging that the graphics are "bold and often quite provocative," managing editor Thatcher Bailey added, "but we're talking about people who must not only struggle for their lives but also for their basic rights."

The press had hoped to have the book, scheduled for its lead title, featured at the recent American Booksellers Association convention. "There's no question that we will be hurt financially by not having the book at the ABA," Bailey said, "but the real shame is that 10 years into a devastating and tragic epidemic, fear and prejudice are still so pervasive."

Publishers Press in Utah is now printing the book. "We do not feel this is an offensive book," sales representative Lyle Mumford said. "We feel it is an important book." Arcata declined to comment.

Publishers believe that the actions of printers reflect a growing censorious mood in the country. Sebastian Orfali, publisher of Ronin Press, who experienced a printer's rejection, pointed out in addition that independent publishers are today a more cohesive group, with more contact among them, and though in the past they tended to shy away from trouble, they are now willing to demand more from their printers.

Orfali said his company

"flags" a title that might be sensitive to the printer's representative. This was the case, he said, with *All-Story of Underground Comics* by Mark J. Estren. It was first published by Straight Arrow Press in 1974 and printed at the former Banta West plant in Sparks, Nev. The book was then acquired by Simon & Schuster and subsequently

called for a third run, they informed me they were going to start a drug-testing program and, like Banta, felt the book would be inconsistent with that situation," Rosenthal said. Arcata is now printing the book.

Two other West Coast publishers, Interport Press and Quick Trading Co., also had marijuana horticulture titles rejected after initial printings in the thousands.

Joani Blank of Down There Press in Burlingame, Calif., said that all short-run printers in Ann Arbor

the so-called Bible Belt.

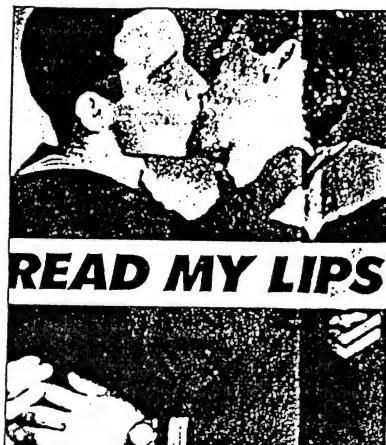
A spokesperson for R.R. Donnelley said, "You have to think about the persons on the line. In some cases, those who object to a book are permitted to get off that production line."

Comerford of Ringier America said his firm follows a policy stated in the minutes of the board of directors when the company was W.A. Krueger: If a graphic shows an exposed sexual organ or a book is deemed offensive to its employees or customers, it is rejected. "I don't think we get out to customers who publish that kind of thing," Comerford said.

At Donnelley, as at many other plants, sensitive material is reviewed on a case-by-case basis by sales managers and senior management. "It's an informal, ad hoc kind of thing, a question of corporate culture," a spokesperson said. "Our sales people do not bid on sensitive material." He added that exploring AIDS in a textbook is not seen as objectionable and emphasized that Donnelley has printed many books on such subjects as AIDS, homosexuality and lesbianism.

Although Arcata declined to comment, a check of its book lists reveals that it has printed hundreds of works relating to AIDS, gays, lesbians, incest and other topics that could be offensive.

A printing company president who asked to be anonymous, said, "Our basis is that if we think the book or visuals tend to be detrimental to any segment of society, we would not like to be a party to publishing it. When there is a fine line between artistic and inartistic, we then consider whether we have gotten into a situation by contract, even though we did not know at first what we were dealing with. In one case, in that fine-line situation, I was influenced by the fact that we had a contract with the publisher and we went ahead with the book." —JEROME P. FRANK



One of the "provocative" graphics reproduced in the Bay Press book is a poster for a "Kiss In" called to fight homophobia and AIDS.

went out of print. In 1983 Orfali contracted for the book and the first printing was by Delta Lithograph. "In 1988, however, we went back for reprint and Delta refused," Orfali said. He conjectured that the rejection was caused by the comics of one author showing copulation.

PW was unable to reach Delta.

Red Eye Press claims that Banta refused to do a second printing after printing 250,000 copies of *Deluxe Marijuana Grower's Guide* by Mel Frank and Ed Rosenthal. Although Banta refused to comment, author Rosenthal said he was told that Banta was instituting a drug-testing program and felt the book was inappropriate at that time.

The book was shifted to McNaughton & Gunn in Ann Arbor, Mich., which provided two print runs of 5000 copies each. "When I

turned down *Men Loving Themselves*, a self-education book dealing with masturbation. A small commercial printer printed two runs, and not only refused a third but destroyed the negatives. Blank took the printer to court, and lost. The book was finally printed by McNaughton & Gunn.

### Printers Comment

Printers interviewed claim they rarely reject material. At Ringier America, for example, rejections occur less than once a year, according to Robert Comerford, senior vice-president, Book Group.

Few printers have formal guidelines defining obscenity or outlining a process for dealing with it. Printing house representatives said they reject projects for business reasons, when they fear material would offend other customers or their employees, particularly where plants are located in

# Joe Bob Briggs

## 2 Live Crew Goes 2 Far

by Joe Bob Briggs

So far, the hip dudes in the pro-First Amendment American media have produced:

a) 14,000 pleas to leave 2 Live Crew alone. They can rap nasty if they wanna rap nasty.

b) 4,000 wimp wishy-washy "on the one hand, on the other hand" articles. These are the guys who say "Well, as long as this material doesn't get into the hands of minors" -- when it's the minors who *want* the stuff. You don't have sixty-year-old couples walking into Tracks and asking if they have "Me So Horny" on CD. The parents can't stand this music.

c) 97,000 articles describing 2 Live Crew as "controversial rap musicians who frequently use vulgar sexual terms."

"I know the stuff is 'lewd and suggestive.' That's what they said 35 years ago about Elvis."

And then there are the rest of us, who have no idea what's going on. And do you know why? Because there hasn't been one newspaper, radio station, or TV station willing to *tell us what the lyrics are!*

I've searched.

I've looked.

I've been told that every Ameri-



can newsroom has a copy of the lyrics. The reporter knows what they are. The managing editor knows what they are. Everybody knows except us.

I've got a pretty good idea. I know the songs are full of ridiculous bragging about what the rappers did to and with various women. Of course, if this is all there was to it, they'd have to arrest all the regulars at every Irish pub. I know the stuff is "lewd and suggestive." That's what they said 35 years ago about Elvis. I know they use the f-word, the c-word, and the dreaded k-word, but not the much rarer double-reverse q-word. But I've never

heard of cops going down to Sound Warehouse and listening to Whitesnake albums, trying to find out if they're a) sexist b) nasty, or c) use the f-word.

Actually, it would be pretty funny.

"Will you crank up that amp a little more, Sergeant? I don't know if he's saying 'You put a hickey on my mouth' or 'You look like Mickey Mouse.'

In other words, why are they picking on these guys?"

I could give you the names of musicians who would *love* to be hauled off to jail. It really cranks up those record sales when you can't get a lot of MTV airplay.

But I have an idea why they chose these guys. It's the same principle they use when the vice cops want to bust a store for selling pornography. The cop doesn't walk into the store and buy Playboy magazine. He goes in there and buys

something called "Mouth and Garden" -- the kind of magazine where you look at the cover and go "Is that a part of her body or did the dog throw up on this magazine?" In other words, they get something *guaranteed to gross out the jury*.

Obviously, whatever raunchy stuff 2 Live Crew is saying about women, sex, and life in general is *guaranteed to gross out the jury*.

Now--why should it be strange that kids like it?

Kids like it because it *grosses*

*out their parents.*

Parents hate it because it *makes their kids act gross*.

This is what makes the kids kids, and the parents parents. This will always be the case with music.

And then there are *some* parents who hate loud music so much that, if they could, they would lock up the people who sing it.

They did.

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comic RELIEF #15 (SEPT 1990)



# CENSORING THE PARANORMAL

Writer Charles Fort called them "the damned." Debunkers call them superstitious nonsense that threatens to undermine the fabric of science. Christian fundamentalists call them satanic manifestations that undermine faith in God. Other people simply call them anomalies.

Anomalies are things, or alleged things, that don't fit. They can be minor oddities, of no interest to anyone except a scientist in a highly specialized discipline. Or they can be something else, something hinting at dramatic possibilities and attracting widespread attention and controversy: a UFO sighting, a psychic experience, an encounter with a poltergeist, a report of an unusual animal not known to conventional zoology. Anomalies are nothing new. As long as there have been human beings, people have claimed experiences with phenomena that, according to the prevailing religious or scientific orthodoxy, were not supposed to exist. Some, such as those unfortunates who made such claims during the Inquisition, were burned at the stake for it. Today the burning goes on, if only metaphorically.

In 1977 a group of prominent academics and journalists—few of whom had firsthand experience with anomaly research—formed the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP). The committee, whose members included such luminaries as Carl Sagan and Harvard zoologist Stephen J. Gould, declared as their mission nothing less than the salvation of Western civilization from "irrationality" and "dangerous sects," which, because they accepted the reality of anomalies, opposed science—or so CSICOP charged.

Not long afterward CSICOP complained to the Federal Communications Commission about an NBC documentary that treated paranormal phenomena more sympathetically than the debunkers liked. Although CSICOP alleged that the point of view the documentary represented was harmful to the public, the FCC, unimpressed, refused to act.

In one strange incident CSICOP official Philip J. Klass, learning of a forum on anomalies research that the University of Nebraska was sponsoring, called the school to protest that CSICOP's views were not being represented and that, moreover, in questioning the United States government's word on the nonexistence of UFOs, speakers at the conference were seeking "what the Soviet Union does—to convey to the public that our government cannot

be trusted, that it lies, that it falsifies. . . . As a patriotic American, I very much resent [this]." After Klass threatened legal action against the university, it canceled its sponsorship of future conferences of this kind. Klass withdrew the threat and pronounced himself satisfied with the university's action.

Since then satellite groups of debunkers have proliferated all around the country, determined to do battle with "pseudoscience" real and imagined. Not content simply to argue the issues on their merits, they have harassed colleges and universities into dropping (usually noncredit) courses in parapsychology, conducted vituperative campaigns against anomaly proponents, and done—in the words of Philadelphian Drew Endacott, one of their number—"anything short of criminal activity" to get "the point across to people who have no demonstrated facility to reason."

As the antianomaly hysteria has escalated, even some skeptics have begun to express alarm. Psychologist Ray Hyman, a respected critic of parapsychology, speaks of a "frightening fundamentalism" in all this, a "witch-hunting" mentality that has nothing to do with real science. CSICOP cofounder Marcello Truzzi, a sociologist who left the organization when he grew concerned that it was becoming an "inquisitional body," says that some debunkers have gone "berserk."

In fact, many scientists do not share these skeptics' certainty that all anomalies are bogus. In 1969 the Parapsychological Association was accepted as an affiliate of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Ten years later the AAAS's newly elected president, Kenneth Boulding, declared, "The evidence of parapsychology cannot just be dismissed out of hand." In recent years polls of scientists and academics have revealed a considerable degree of open-mindedness on the subject. And in 1976, when physicist Peter Sturrock polled the members of the American Astronomical Society, fully 80 percent agreed the UFO phenomenon deserves scientific attention. Several of the astronomers described their own UFO sightings.

If history is any guide, most supposed anomalies will eventually be explained in conventional terms, either as delusions or as misinterpreted, mundane events—and a few will prove rather more interesting than that. Meanwhile, it's time to defuse the hysteria and get back to the serious business of dispassionate investigation.—JEROME CLARK

2 The Sydney Morning Herald

Monday, July 2, 1990



## Qld dumps film censorship board

By GREG ROBERTS

BRISBANE: People in Queensland soon will be able to watch controversial films like *The Last Temptation of Christ*, after the sacking of the State's film censorship board.

The decision to axe the Queensland Film Board of Review was made by the Minister for Justice, Mr Glen Milliner, and notified in a weekend edition of the State's Government Gazette.

It means that Queenslanders will be able to watch films and videos which have long been available to other Australians.

The board, established in 1974, banned 172 films and videos that had been given the green light by the Commonwealth film censor.

Not all prohibited films were R-rated. Some, like *Pretty Baby*, were M-rated.

Queensland was the only place in the Western world that banned *The Last Temptation of Christ*, a controversial but widely acclaimed look at the life of Jesus Christ, screened in 1988.

The board angered the Goss Government several weeks ago when it banned the film *Bad Taste* after it had been screening for three weeks in Brisbane.

The board had also banned several AIDS educational videos, including one which shows a man with an erection demonstrating how to put a condom on.

Later this year, the Government is expected to introduce legislation which will formally abolish the film board and the State's literature review board. The literature board has not met since the election last December.

In another sign that the social

environment in Queensland is changing, the State's first homosexual festival ended at the weekend with a march through the streets of Brisbane by 600 gays and lesbians.

The march and a rally in the city's Roma Street Forum were interrupted by demonstrations by Christian fundamentalists and an assortment of people vehemently opposed to homosexuality.

A group of young men heckled speakers at the rally, shouting "filthy scum", "go home, poofs" and similar epithets.

Others taunted participants by displaying signs such as "Stop AIDS - Export All Poofs".

The festival and the scrapping of the film board were condemned yesterday by the Logos Foundation, a Toowoomba-based religious group.



## OFFICE OF FILM AND LITERATURE CLASSIFICATION

(Inc. the Film Censorship Board)

### INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. 5 — March 1990

## GUIDELINES FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF FILMS, VIDEOTAPES AND PRINTED MATTER

### MEMBERSHIP OF THE FILM CENSORSHIP BOARD

### FILM AND LITERATURE BOARD OF REVIEW

#### PREAMBLE

Adults in a free society should be allowed as far as possible to see what they wish, and creative artists, including filmmakers, to depict what they please without fear of intervention by the State.

It is generally accepted, however, that the exercise of these rights carries certain responsibilities and must be subject to a number of constraints for the good of society as a whole.

Our right to see what we please cannot be allowed to infringe the rights of others. Children and young people, in particular, must be adequately protected from material likely to harm or disturb them, and people who may be offended by certain material have a right to expect that it will not be thrust upon them against their will or without warning.

Equally, the community has the right to ban material considered likely to endanger public health or safety, or grossly to offend accepted standards of public decency. Thus, films depicting child sexual abuse or bestiality, for example, or offering guidance or instruction in matters of crime, violence or drug abuse will be refused classification.

The attention given to acts of violence in modern society, especially sexual violence, has created a justifiable concern among many people that the depiction of violence in popular entertainment will encourage acts of imitation. Even if it could be shown that this was unlikely to occur, the feelings of those who abhor violence of any kind and consider its depiction in extreme forms degrading deserve respect. Any depiction of violence in films and videos must therefore be subject to careful scrutiny, and reserved, where appropriate, for mature and/or adult audiences.

The primary responsibility for protecting children and young people from harmful material rests with their parents or guardians. In discharging that responsibility they have a right to expect assistance from the State, especially as films and videos are so readily accessible. They must be confident that material to which children may be exposed has been carefully examined and appropriately classified.

The classification of films and videos is intended, therefore, both to protect children and young people, and to respect the sensibilities of adults who are concerned about violence and its effect on the community, and would consider certain kinds of material personally offensive.

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES APPLYING TO THE GUIDELINES INCLUDE

- Adults should be free to see what they wish provided there is sufficient protection for young people, and those people who do not wish to see certain material should not have it thrust upon them.
- The classification should reflect what a reasonable adult person would consider within the acceptable limits of community standards for that age group.
- The closest attention is paid to the portrayal of violence and, in particular, sexual violence.
- Certain classes of activity, such as child sexual abuse, bestiality, and the incitement or encouragement violent or criminal acts are refused classification.

#### ADDITIONAL CONSUMER INFORMATION

Films and videos classified 'PG', 'M', and 'R' categories will carry, in addition to the classification symbols, consumer advice indicating the principal elements responsible for that classification. This advice appears prominently on the cover of each video, on the cassette itself and in all advertising material.

#### GUIDELINES FOR FILMS AND VIDEOTAPES

##### PG General (suitable for all ages)

Parents should feel confident that children may view material in this classification without supervision, knowing that no distress or harm is likely to be caused.

The following are permissible —

*Language:* The mildest expletives, but only if infrequent and used in exceptional and justifiable circumstances.

*Sex:* Very discreet verbal references or implications, provided they are justified by the narrative or other context.

*Violence:* Minimal, mild and incidental depictions, provided they are justified by the context.

##### PG Parental Guidance (parental guidance recommended for persons under 15)

Films in this classification may contain adult themes or concepts which, when viewed by those under 15 years, require the guidance of a parent or guardian.

The following are permissible —

*Language:* Low level coarse language is acceptable, provided its use is not excessive.

*Sex:* Discreet verbal and/or visual depictions, and references to sexual matters.

*Violence:* Depictions of violence must be mild in their impact, and/or presented in a stylized or theatrical fashion, or in an historical context.

*Other:* Discreet informational and/or anti-drug references. Minimal nudity if in a justifiable context.

##### (M) 15+ Mature (recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over)

Material which is considered likely to disturb, harm or offend those under the age of 15 years will be classified 'M'. While most adult themes may be dealt with, the degree of explicitness and intensity of treatment will determine what can be accommodated in this classification.

*Language:* Crude language may be used, but not when it is excessive, unduly

**Sex:** Sexual intercourse or other sexual activity may be discreetly implied or simulated.

**Violence:** Realistic violence of medium intensity may be depicted, but violent depictions with a high degree of realism or impact are acceptable only if contextually justified.

**Other:** Drug use may be depicted, but not in an advocacy manner. Supernatural and "horror" special effects usually warrant an 'M' classification.

**18+ Restricted (restricted to adults 18 years and over)**

Material considered likely to be harmful to those under 18 years and possibly offensive to some sections of the adult community warrants an 'R' classification.

**Language:** There are virtually no restrictions on language in 'R' films. **Sex:** Sexual intercourse or other sexual activity may be realistically implied or simulated. Depictions of sexual violence are acceptable only to the extent that they are necessary to the narrative and not exploitative.

**Violence:** Highly realistic and explicit depictions of violence may be shown, but not if unduly detailed, relished or cruel.

**Other:** Drug abuse may be depicted, but not in an advocacy manner. Extreme "horror" special effects usually warrant an 'R'.

**18+ Contains sexually explicit material (restricted to adults 18 years and over)**

No depiction of sexual violence, coercion or non-consent of any kind is permitted in this classification. Material which can be accommodated in this classification includes explicit depictions of sexual acts between consenting adults and mild non-violent fetishes.

**Refused Classification**

Any film or video which includes any of the following will be refused classification:

- depictions of child sexual abuse, bestiality, sexual acts accompanied by offensive fetishes, or exploitative incest fantasies
- unduly detailed and/or relished acts of extreme violence or cruelty; explicit or unjustifiable depictions of sexual violence against non-consenting persons
- consenting persons detailed instruction or encouragement in:
  - matters of crime or violence
  - the abuse of proscribed drugs.

**GUIDELINES FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF PRINTED MATTER**

These guidelines are applied in accordance with the principles set out in the A.C.T. Classification of Publications Ordinance 1983. They are also applied to printed matter available in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

The arrangement follows agreement between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory, Victorian, South Australian and New South Wales governments that there should be a voluntary and uniform classification scheme for printed matter. Other States operate their own schemes.

A classification officer and the Review Board shall, in deciding whether an item is suitable for classification or should be refused classification, have regard to the general character of the item and, any literary, artistic or educational merit it may possess.

Unrestricted  
• Contents

*Pictorial representations:*

- no offensive wording
- discreet nudity (no genitalia)
- implied and discreet depictions of sexual acts
- artwork, cartoons etc. depicting non-realistic nudity or sexual activity

*Written descriptions:*

- some descriptions of sexual activity involving adults in a publication not overwhelmingly dedicated to sexual matters.

• Covers

- no offensive wording
- discreet nudity (no genitalia)
- no pictorial depictions of sexual acts

**Restricted — Category 1**

(18 years and over, to be displayed in a sealed wrapper)

*Pictorial representations:*

- explicit nudity
- implied depictions of sexual acts
- obscured depictions of sexual acts
- mild fetishes
- artwork, cartoons, etc. depicting explicit nudity and sexual activity

*Written descriptions:*

- realistic and gratuitous descriptions of violence
- relished descriptions of sexual activity involving adults

- Covers
- no offensive wording
- discreet nudity (no genitalia)
- no pictorial depictions of sexual acts

**Restricted — Category 2**

(18 years and over, to be sold only on restricted premises)

*Pictorial representations:*

- explicit sexual acts
- fetishes including sado-masochism and bondage if not extreme

*Written descriptions:*

- descriptions of sexual activity including activity between humans and animals or sexual cruelty
- Covers
- no proscription as material confined to restricted area

**Refused classification**  
(Not to be sold or hired)

*Pictorial representations:*

- bestiality
- child pornography
- extreme cruelty and dangerous practices

*Written descriptions:*

- promotion, incitement or encouragement to drug abuse including 'do it yourself'
- promotion, incitement or encouragement to crime or violence
- promotion, incitement or instruction in matters of crime or violence

**THINK FOR YOURSELF!**

FILM CENSORSHIP BUAKE

Chief Censor

- John Joseph DICKIE, B.A. (Melb), Dip. Journalism (Melb)
  - Date of Birth: 4 January 1941
  - 1 February 1988: Appointed Chief Censor; appointment expires 31 January 1993
  - 1986 Assistant Secretary, Special Services Branch, Attorney-General's Department
  - 1983-86 Assistant Secretary, Promotion and Information Branch, Human Rights' Commission
  - 1974-83 Director, Information and Public Relations, Attorney-General's Department
  - 1968-74 Press Officer, Attorney-General's Department
  - 1960-63 Journalist — *The Age*, Melbourne (Chief Law Courts Reporter)
  - 1958-60 Cadet journalist Brisbane Telegraph
- Deputy Chief Censor
  - David Andrew HAINES, Dip. Ed. (Bristol, U.K.)
  - Date of Birth: 5 March 1942
  - 1 July 1988: Appointed Deputy Chief Censor; appointment expires 30 June 1992
  - 1986 to 30 June 1988: Acting Deputy Chief Censor.
  - 8 July 1981: Appointed Board Member
  - 1979-81 Co-writer and producer, children's television drama
  - 1968-79 English, drama and media studies in senior co-educational schools (U.K.)
- 1959-65 Worked in banking and the wine industry, U.K. and South America.
- Senior Censor
  - Andree Margaret WRIGHT, B.A. (Hons.) (A.N.U.)
  - Date of Birth: 30 October 1950
  - 19 February 1990: Appointed Senior Censor; appointment expires 31 December 1992
  - Oct 1988-Jan 1990: Project Officer, Australian Broadcasting Tribunal Inquiry into Media Violence
  - 20 Feb 1986: Appointed as Board Member until 31.12.91
  - 1985 Freelance writer and historian both literary and television; author of BRILLIANT CAREERS, pub. Pan Books 1986
  - 1983-84 Co-director/writer/researcher on documentary feature film DON'T CALL ME GIRLIE
  - 1981 Senior Tutor, Dept. of History, University of Sydney
  - 1980 Freelance writer/researcher for ATN-7 Sydney Morning Herald sponsored T.V. special ISLAND OF DREAMS
  - 1975-79 Tutor and Senior Tutor in History, Universities of N.S.W. and Sydney
- Members
  - William SALTER, B.A. (R.M.I.T.), Dip. Teaching (Philip Institute)
  - Date of Birth: 6 September 1952
  - 15 January 1985: Appointed Board Member; appointment expires 31 December 1990
  - 1979-84 Film Acquisition/Appraisal Officer, Special Projects Officer, Victorian Education Department (Film and Video Collection); District Liaison Officer (Audio Visual Resources Branch); production duties (film unit) — Victorian Education Department
  - 1977-79 Schools Art Teacher (Media studies and filmmaking)

- Andrée Margarit
- Date of Birth
- 19 February
- 1992
- Oct 1988–Jan 1990
- Media Violence
- 20 Feb 1986–
- 1985
- 1983–84
- 1981
- 1980
- 1975–79

Members

- William SALTER, B.A. (R.M.I.T.), Dip. Teaching (Philip Institute)
  - Date of Birth: 6 September 1952
  - 15 January 1985: Appointed Board Member; appointment expires 31 December 1990
  - 1979-84 Film Acquisition/Appraisal Officer; Special Projects Officer, Victorian Education Department (Film and Video Collection); District Liaison Officer (Audio Visual Resources Branch); production duties (film unit) — Victorian Education Department
  - 1977-79 Schools Art Teacher (Media studies and filmmaking)

## Members

- Date of Birth: 6 September 1952
- 15 January 1985: Appointed Board Member; appointment expires 31 December 1990
- 1979-84 Film Acquisition/Appraisal Officer; Special Projects Officer, Victorian Education Department (Film and Video Collection); District Liaison Officer (Audio Visual Resources Branch); production duties (film unit) — Victorian Education Department
- 1977-79 Schools Art Teacher (Media studies and filmmaking)

tina)

Kathryn Maree PATERSON B.Sc. (Macquarie University)

- Date of Birth: 5 October 1953
- 16 May 1985: Appointed Board Member; appointment expires 31 December 1990
- 1972-85 Toolmaker with Gerard Industries, Adelaide

Robert HELLMERS, B.A., Dip. Ed., M.A. (Psych.), Sydney University, M.A. Ps. S.

- Date of Birth: 17 October 1962
- 19 September 1988: Appointed Board Member; appointment expires 14 September 1991
- 1985-88 Deputy Censor and Information Officer, Film Censorship Board
- 1984-85 Acted as Regional Inspector, Literature Classification Australian Public Service, personnel clerk
- 1984 Australian Red Cross, clerk

Silvia Paula LEVAME, Master of Laws (P.U.C.A., Argentina)

- Date of Birth: 23.5.47
- 1 November 1988 Appointed Board Member; appointment expires 31 October 1991
- 1987 Education Officer, Drug and Alcohol Workers' Course. TAFE, (secondment)
- 1983-88 Founder and Director of Ethnic Line Inc.
- Producer and broadcaster of radio programs Drug and Alcohol Counsellor
- Trainer in Cross Cultural Counselling
- Australian Delegate to China (Australian Women Delegation) May-June, 1986
- Delegate for N.S.W. to the Second Conference of Drug Educators Canberra, May, 1987
- Delegate for N.S.W. to the Second International Congress on AIDS held in Hobart (Tasmania), September 1988
- 1980-83 Bi-lingual Information Officer, (Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs). Interpreter (TIS)
- Migrant Welfare Officer
- 1979-80 Freelance journalist for Spanish Press. Foreign correspondent for "La Capital", Argentina
- 1975-88 Attorney and Legal adviser in commercial and administrative matters (private practice) (Argentina) Lecturer of History of the Western Culture (Argentina) Teacher of Legal and Civil Education (Argentina)
- 1971-75



- 1982-88 Part-time lecturer, S.A. Institute of Technology and WEA
- 1983-87 General Manager of a chain of video shops. Contributing editor of the Australian Video and Computer Magazine
- 1980-82 Director, Christies Beach Community Health Centre
- 1977-80 Social Planner, S.A. Public Service
- 1974-77 Director, Western Adelaide RCSD (A.A.P.)
- 1973-76 Teacher and part-time syndicated film and theatre critic, Sydney
- Antoinette RYDYL, Dip. of Art and Design at Caulfield Institute of Technology
- Date of Birth: 22.3.60
- 1989 Appointed Board Member, appointment expires 31 December 1991
- 1987-88 Freelance graphic artist and video producer
- 1983-86 Graphic Artist and Video Producer for community production unit
- 1980-82 Freelance Graphic Artist and illustrator
- Gareth GRIFFITH, B.Sc. (Econ.), PhD in Politics (Wales)
- Date of Birth: 6 June 1953
- 15 January 1990: Appointed Board Member, appointment expires 31 December 1992
- 1989 Lecturer, La Trobe University
- Sep-Dec 1988: Member, Film Censorship Board
- 1987-88 Secretary to the Individual and Democratic Rights Advisory Committee to the Constitutional Commission
- 1987 Adviser to the Shadow Minister for Education
- 1981-87 Senior Lecturer, Department of Politics and Government, City of London Polytechnic
- Peter William MACKAY
- Date of Birth: 9 January 1951
- 19 February 1990: Appointed Board Member, appointment expires 31 December 1992
- January-December 1989: Member, Cinematograph Films Board of Review
- 1988 Co-ordinator, Manly Warringah Adolescent Support Program, Manly Municipal Council Peninsular Family and Youth Support Services, Kangaroo Street Community Centre, Manly
- 1987-88 Casual Youth and Recreation Leadership, Warringah Shire Council, Community Services Department
- 1982-84 Youth Services Co-ordinator, Warringah Shire Council
- 1980-82 Directors, Outreach, A.C.T.
- 1979-80 Senior Supervisor, Stewart House Preventorium, Harbord, N.S.W.
- 1973-78 Youth Worker, Liverpool, England

#### FILM AND LITERATURE BOARD OF REVIEW

- Chairman
- Frank Ewan WILLIAMS
- Date of Birth: 22 October 1934
- 1 January 1988: Appointed Chairman; appointment expires 31 December 1990
- 1984 Director of the Office of the Minister for the Arts
- 1977-84 Director of the Division of Cultural Activities of the N.S.W. Premier's Department
- 1972-75 Prime Ministerial adviser
- 1981-88 Film Critic for *The Australian*, Film Reviewer for the ABC
- Former Literary Editor and Film Critic of the Sydney Morning Herald
- Executive Member of the Cultural Grants Advisory Council of N.S.W. since 1977

- Deputy Chairman
- Keith CONNOLLY
- Date of Birth: 15 October 1928
- 27 April 1989: Appointed Deputy Chairman; appointment expires 31 December 1990
- 22 February 1985: Appointed as Member; appointment expires 31 December 1990
- 1969-87 Journalist and film critic Melbourne Herald Journalist on newspapers in Western Australia, Tasmania and Victoria

#### Members

- Michael John ELLIGATE, B.A., Dip. Ed., Bachelor of Education, Latrobe University
- Date of Birth: 5 May 1946
- 1 January 1988: Appointed Member; appointment expires 31 December 1990
- Appointed Chaplain Melbourne University 1987
- Parish priest at St. Carthage's Church, Parkville (Vic.)
- Theology studies, Corpus Christi College, Clayton (Vic.)
- Educated at the Assumption College, Kilmore (Vic.)

- Mary Madeleine FINN, B.A. (Qld.), Bachelor of Laws (Qld.), Barrister (Qld.) Barrister and Solicitor (A.C.T.)
- Date of Birth: 4 July 1946
- 1 January 1988: Appointed Member; appointment expires 31 December 1990
- 8 January 1988 Senior Assistant Secretary, Justice Division, Attorney-General's Department
- 1986 Adviser — Family Law, Attorney-General's Department (working on Child Support proposals and the Australian Law Reform Commission's Matrimonial Property Reference)
- 1983-86 Member of the Board of Management of the Institute of Family Studies
- 1980-86 Legal Officer, Senior Legal Officer, Principal Legal Officer in the Attorney-General's Department
- 1979-80 Legal Research Officer, Parliamentary Joint Selection Committee on the Family Law Act
- 1970-76 Private legal practice

- Susan Kathleen MILLIKEN
- Date of Birth: 18 January 1940
- 27 April 1989: Appointed Member; appointment expires 31 December 1992
- Vice-President, Screen Producers' Association of Australia
- 1988 Producer, *Hijack of Achille Lauro*, NBC Network Television; undertook review of South Australian Film Corporation for South Australian Department of the Arts
- 1986 Producer, *Les Patterson Saves the World*
- 1985 Producer, *The Fringe Dwellers*
- 1980-85 Established and supervised the Australian operation of completion guarantor Film Finance Ltd
- 1977-81 Co-producer with Husband Tom Jeffery: *Weekend of Shadows* (1977), *The Odd Angry Shot* (1978), *Fighting Back* (1981)

Further information may be obtained by telephoning Mr David Haines or Ms Andree Wright or Mr Frank Marzic on (02) 267 2711 or by writing to:  
The Chief Censor  
Office of Film and Literature Classification

# LOVE - WAR - RIOT

# 'Erotica' Cinema Exposed! or The Deflowering of an Innocent Film Reviewer

The corruption of star reviewer, JONATHAN SEQUEIRA, began when he succumbed to a bribe to do this article- just what does go on in those so-called 'erotica' cinemas? What type of people go there? Well, certainly not high cinematic art, and you wouldn't expect to run into your aunt there. Needless, to say, Jonno wasn't impressed!

It is curious to note that this story began with a possibly sincere compliment to myself from the film editor. Caught off-guard by this covert tactic of flattery, my defences were down as he offered to slip me into any Sydney Film Festival films I wanted to see in exchange for a small assignment. Still reeling, I unwittingly agreed to explore the depths (or shallows), and experience the pleasures/horrors of an X-rated movie house. But to be honest with you (and people like reading truth as much as they like reading lies), I must say that I was inspired by a sort of perverse curiosity. After all, one can only learn from experience.....

Well, off I trotted nervously to an "Erotica" cinema, although after sitting through one of their shows, "erotic" is the last adjective I would choose to describe a truly spin-out of an experience!

The Hub at Newtown was the scene of my adventure, as it is conveniently located close to my house. This proximity was not without its drawbacks, as I could not help feeling paranoid about the possibility of some nearby friend or neighbour would walk past just as I entered or exited the foyer- not something easily explained!

Feeling strangely relaxed, and curious, I shelled out my hard-earned bucks for a ticket. "When's the next film?" I asked the owner.

"From 10 a.m. to 11 p.m." he replied, half answering the question.

"How many films do you show each day? What times are they on?" I queried again. The small elderly man then informed me that they show the stuff non-stop for the whole thirteen hours.

"Geez. What if you walk in half-way through a film and miss the plot?" I thought. I then realised that that was probably the stupidest thought I ever had. After all, I wasn't there to see *Lawrence of Arabia*, or even *Rambo VI: Blowing Crap Out of Anonymous Middle Eastern Terrorists*. I mean, a picture tells a thousand words, right? And if the picture's moving, and has lots of sound effects, then how many words do you need? In this case, none.

Anyway, the manager told me that with my ticket, I can go in and out (so to speak) as many times as I want. Talk about value for money!

So into the theatre I ventured. There it was, a fuzzy screen in a very dark cinema. The screen got became less fuzzy when I put my glasses on, but I was disappointed that I could not see any dirty old men in trenchcoats, but then even when my eyes adjusted, the cinema was still only a shade lighter than an unlit mine shaft. The place seats about 200, and obviously goes back a long way, looking at the old theatre seats. For some bizarre reason, a disco mirror-ball hung from the ceiling. Even more curious was the illuminated Gents sign in the corner- first time I'd ever seen toilets in the screening area of a cinema. Perhaps that's why the seats weren't sticky.

On with the movie, or movies. A couple copulating is all that is needed to describe what was happening. However, this would be leave a lot of white newsprint, so I had better elaborate. A man and a woman move around on a bed; he on top of her, she on top of him, she licks his fiddly bits, then he does the same. Close-ups of willies going into little holes, and lots of moaning. The woman saying "Fuck me" and the man replying, "Yeah, oh yeah!" Combine this with music that sounds like a pre-programmed Chris

Marshall Casio organ, and you've got a problem. That is, if you actually pay to watch this sort of thing.

When the first couple's scene finishes with the guy making a yukky mess all over the woman's face, we fade to black and another willing duo do the same. Exactly the same. Each couple just seemed to go through the paces, just as the previous one did. Maybe there was a writer's strike and they were short of scripts. It didn't really matter I suppose. The lack of dialogue matched the acting skills- NIL! Never have I heard two people moan so unconvincingly. It was this sound that really pushed the whole thing over the cliff and into the ridiculous. I could just imagine a quarter-witted director just off-screen going, "OK that's a rap!"

Still, the audience seemed to be transfixed. My initial disappointment left me as I realised that the cinema was not as empty

as I first thought. Twenty to thirty middle-aged men is not bad for around 11:30 on a Tuesday morning. I wondered about the people who walked out, only to return ten minutes later. I also wondered why everyone carried bags with them. Oh, well, what's life without a few mysteries?

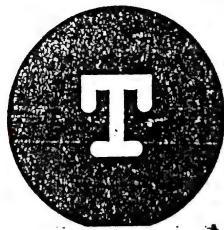
So there you have sex on the big screen.

It hardly qualifies as erotica, it seems as though it's just the opposite. Sexy is all the things associated with, but excluding bonking. Yet two people jumping up and down on top of each other is really all that was shown. Someone once said that sex is two people making idiots of themselves. They'd obviously been to an "erotica" cinema and seen a few X-rated movies.

## NEWSWIT 41



## THE X DEBATE



Steven Daly  
on US film  
censorship

The most contentious issue in American cinema at the moment focuses on one little

letter - X. Filmmakers are growing increasingly unhappy with an anachronistic ratings system which is unable to differentiate between adult-themed films and pornography. The curious thing about the current controversy is not its scale, but its timing: why it's taken the better part of two decades to come to the surface. When the present system was introduced in 1968 it was commonplace for major films to bear an X certificate (*Midnight Cowboy* won an Oscar while so rated), but with the onslaught of porn in the early Seventies, X films were consigned to fleapits.

Since then, American film-makers have complied with the criteria for an R rating, the notch below X on the Motion Picture Association of America's scale. A movie with this certification can be seen by children who are accompanied by someone over 17, so pictures like *Angel Heart*, *Crimes Of Passion* and *9½ Weeks* had to shed their steamiest scenes prior to US release. (Sex is one thing, but apparently violence is quite another: *Variety* recently reported a study indicating that movies in the R category contain twice as much violence against women as hardcore pornography.)

Since many American distributors' deals with theatres prohibit the showing of X- or un-rated material (in shopping mall multiplexes, for example), and some cities forbid newspaper or TV ads for those movies, the effect is censorship through economics. You can have freedom of expression - but not freedom to profit from that expression. MPAA head Jack Valenti consistently denies such accusations, repeatedly stating that his organisation merely offers guidelines to the parents of America.



Scorsese's *GoodFellas*: trimmed to the censor's taste

1990 saw a slew of films significantly affected by America's unique lack of a suitable "adults only" category: *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*, *Wild Orchid*, *Henry: Portrait Of A Serial Killer* and *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* were all involved in bouts with Valenti's MPAA, and Miramax Pictures took the significant step of legally challenging the association over the latter title's X rating. The company lost the court battle, but in summing up, New York state judge Charles E. Ramos questioned the rating system, and attacked its leniency towards violence.

Frustrated at the bartering of artistic freedom which an R certificate demands, Silverlight Entertainment released Hong Kong director Wayne Wang's *Life Is Cheap... But Toilet Paper Is Expensive* under a self-imposed A certificate. By accepting an advertisement which carried this new rating, the *New York Times* was seen to back the filmmakers' cause against the MPAA.

Under mounting pressure, Jack Valenti recently held a secret meeting with ten of the 40 directors who signed an open letter of

complaint to his organisation. While nothing concrete came of the discussions, both factions are reportedly happy that a dialogue has been started. For David Lynch and Martin Scorsese, any change which occurs will be too late, as their latest films - *Wild At Heart* and *GoodFellas* - have already been trimmed to the MPAA's taste. Meanwhile, director Paul Verhoeven (*RoboCop*, *Total Recall*), a man who's accustomed to bending over backwards for the R rating, is intent on challenging the barriers of censorship with his next project. In his adaptation of the Charles Bukowski book *Women*, the Dutchman intends to show the erect penis for the first time in a non-pornographic context. Wish him luck

THE FACE

## Children in NZ bitten by 'lovebytes'

WELLINGTON: New Zealand children are dialling into pornographic "lovebytes".

The Dominion newspaper said the "lovebytes" - able to be ordered by anybody with a home computer and a modem - were transmitted over phone lines.

The material, which is advertised on computer bulletin boards, includes text, text and images, stand-alone images and animation.

It can be imported by phone from anywhere in the world making it impossible for customs officers to seize it.

"The aspect of technology is something we are looking at now in terms of censorship," Department of Internal Affairs adviser Gaynor Bradfield said.

Law lecturer Bill Hastings said any law to stop computer porn would be "damn hard to enforce".

The report said various microcomputer club members contacted indicated they knew all about what was available but denied using it. - AFP

DAILY MIRROR, TUESDAY, JULY 10, 1990

There is often no logical reason for various taboos, but while we grow to accept some once-forbidden topics or actions, others remain inviolate, reports

CATHERINE ARMITAGE

EVERY year Stephen Mugford stands in front of a lecture hall full of psychology students and takes a mouthful of water from a glass. Then he spits the water back into the glass. Then he drinks it. And the students groan and cry out in protest at this "disgusting" act.

Mugford, the senior lecturer in psychology at the Australian National University, points out that his act was "hygienically neutral" and there is no rational basis for his students' reactions. He has ingested no more germs than if he'd swallowed the water first go. It's just that his action is "taboo" because he has broken an unwritten rule: that we don't re-ingest products that have already been expelled from the body.

The word taboo was introduced to the English language by Captain James Cook, who heard it used in Polynesia on his third voyage around the world in 1784. From there springs the anthropological definition of taboo as it operated in Polynesia: a prohibition of participating in certain dangerous situations, infringement of which often resulted in a penalty — often death.

These days taboo has a much wider meaning. On one level it refers to things that social convention, often supported by law, dictates that we must not do, from defecating in public to eating people or having sex with close relatives. On another it refers to things "nice" people don't talk about, such as vomiting (how long and how much), death and again, having sex with close relatives.

In Polynesia, many taboos revolved around the chief of the tribe, priests or other people of high rank or status. For example, it was "taboo", on pain of death, to touch the chief, particularly his head, or to let your shadow fall on him. Taboos could be declared by certain officials such as the food controller, who made foods taboo if they were scarce. The chief exercised social control through wide powers over taboos. During Cook's visit to Polynesia, for example, the bay where his ship was anchored was declared taboo to prevent the locals visiting. Contact with women was taboo when they were menstruating or in childbirth. Certain foods were always taboo to women, including pork, turtle, several kinds of fish and some plants.

Stephen Mugford points out that most taboos have no scientific basis but they do have the power of "moral force". They provide a convenient way of identifying "who is normal and who is not", or even "who is nice and who is not".

Thus, a person who goes shopping with no clothes on is labelled crazy. But taboos can also be used to make more subtle social distinctions, as Mugford explains. "People who know about wines know you serve them in a particular order. If someone breaks a rule, they know 'these people are not really our sort of people'."

Jeremy Beckett, a professor of anthropology at the University of Sydney, says the incest taboo has performed the social function of protecting the notion of the family as the source of love and support for individuals.

"It could be argued that there are repressed desires which people don't want to be reminded of, so if one starts talking about incest one is reminded of what is in their head even if they don't [act on it]," he says.

Taboos vary between cultures, groups of people and over time. In the Victorian era it was taboo among the gentry to discuss sex or even allude to it, even though the most respectable gentlemen frequently kept mistresses or visited brothels. This prudery went

to such extreme lengths as disguising table legs with frilly cloths, and referring to turkey meat as "white meat" and "dark meat" rather than breast and leg.

In Australian society certain foods are taboo, including dog, cat and horse, partly because these animals are kept as pets. These foods are acceptable in some other countries, just as pork is acceptable for most Australians but taboo for Muslims and Jews.

Spitting is also largely taboo in Australia but accepted practice in many parts of Europe and China.

Very strong "taboo zones" exist about the human body, too. In general, the parts of the body nearest the sexual

organs are the most taboo and those furthest away the least. Obviously sexual partners are able to break the taboo in the appropriate settings, as are mothers, but only up to a certain stage of maturity.

Breaking taboos provides great sport for comedians. But Rod Quantock, the veteran Melbourne comic whose comedy show, *Australia, You're Standing In It*, broke new ground (and many taboos) in the early 1980s, says, "Taboos have really almost evaporated over the past 15 or 20 years." One of the few subjects he can think of which seems to be untouchable even for comedians is disability. "You don't hear too many paraplegic or quadriplegic jokes." The sex taboo hung around until the 1950s and 1960s, when it still provided ample fodder for jokes; nowadays it is largely passé.

Whether a subject is taboo or not depends on to whom you are talking, or when. Quantock recalls that a routine he did about nuclear war in the early 1980s fell flat, he thinks because "at that time the issue was particularly strong, there were lots of marches and people found it very, very black".

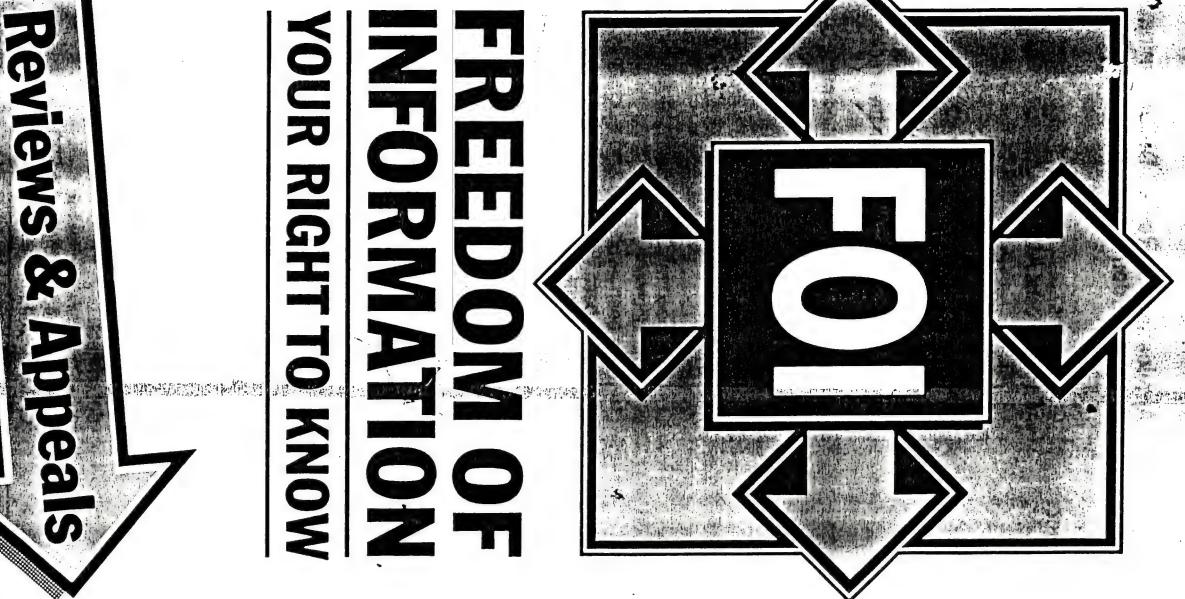
Equally he would hesitate to tell AIDS jokes to a "yuppie" audience for fear that it was "too close" to them, although they may well laugh at jokes about "fathers having intercourse with sheep".

"People are probably fair to say that comedians deliberately go out of their way to tackle taboos... I don't think a comedian would ever put the notion of taboo ahead of a good laugh," says Quantock.

"People get a great deal of relief in being able to laugh about them; it takes a great deal of pressure off them."



# Reviews & Appeals



# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

## YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

### What is Freedom of Information?

In New South Wales, the Freedom of Information Act 1989 gives you the legal right to:

- Obtain access to information held by State Government agencies, Government Ministers, local government and other public bodies;
- Request amendments to records of a personal nature that are inaccurate; and
- Appeal against a decision not to grant access to information or to amend personal records.

This leaflet provides you with information on Reviews and Appeals - what they are, when you should use them and how to use them.

For further details on how to access information held by agencies and organisations, see the leaflet called: "Guidelines For Using FOI".

### What is an Internal Review?

If you are unhappy with a decision made by an agency on your FOI request, you are entitled to ask for an internal review by that agency.

- You may do this if:
- You have been refused access to a document;
- You have been refused access to part of a document;
- You have been refused a request to amend a personal document;
- You believe you have been charged too much;
- You have been given access to a document but access has been deferred;
- You are a third party specified in the documents but have not been consulted about giving access to another person; or
- You have been consulted, but disagree with a decision to release the documents.

An internal review is not available on requests for access to, or amendment of, a Minister's records.

### How do I ask for an Internal Review?

Applications for internal review should be made using an FOI review form or in a letter. Enclose the \$40 application fee.

### What will happen with my request for a Review?

Someone senior to the person who made the original decision on your FOI application will look at your review application.

Within 14 days you will be advised on the outcome of the review.

If you have already sought an internal review and are unhappy with the result, the NSW State Ombudsman can intervene on your behalf where, for example, an agency:

- Takes an unreasonable time to process your FOI request;
- Imposes an unreasonable charge for access to information; or
- Refuses to give you access to information that is not exempt.

If you wish to pursue the matter further, you are entitled to take your appeal to the District Court in NSW.

You must lodge your appeal within 60 days of the agency's decision on your request for internal review or within 60 days of being advised of the Ombudsman's decision.

- Confirm the agency or Minister's original decision;
- Disallow that decision and make another in its place; or
- Pass the matter back to the agency or Minister to be dealt with as directed by the Court.

The District Court does not have the power to determine that access can be given to an exempt document. (Exempt documents are covered in the leaflet called: "Guidelines For Using FOI").

You may be required to meet the legal costs involved in taking your appeal to the District Court.

Legal Aid may be available for FOI appeals in some circumstances. Check with the Legal Aid Office on whether or not you qualify for legal aid before you incur any legal expenses.

**Who can help me with more information if I have any problems understanding this?**

Most Government agencies have an FOI officer who can help you with any queries. If you are unsure about the agency concerned, contact the Government Information Service on (02) 228 8900 or the FOI Unit on (02) 223 6200. Toll free on (008) 04 4051.

### Request for Access to Information Under The Freedom Of Information Act

Details of Applicant

Surname \_\_\_\_\_ (Title) \_\_\_\_\_

Given Names \_\_\_\_\_

Australian Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_

Details of Request

I request access to document(s) concerning matters which are

Place a tick in the appropriate box

Personal

Non Personal

These documents are

Name of Agency holding document \_\_\_\_\_

Form of Access

Place a tick in the appropriate box  
I wish to inspect the document(s)

Yes

No

I require a copy of the document(s)

Yes

No

I require access in another form

Yes

No

specify \_\_\_\_\_

Fee\$ and Charges

Attached is a cheque/money order to the amount of \$30 to cover the application fee.

I understand that I may be required to pay processing charges in respect of this request and that I will be supplied with a statement of charges if appropriate.

Note: In certain cases a 50% reduction in fees and charges may apply. (See the section on fees and charges in the leaflet called "Guidelines for Using FOI").

If you consider you are entitled to a reduction, submit a request with copies of supporting documents with this form.

Yes

No

Place a tick in the appropriate box

Fees

The agency granted me a 50% reduction in fees and charges when I applied for access to documents.

Place a tick in the appropriate box

Yes

If yes, there is a \$20 fee

No

If no, there is a \$40 fee

Lodgement of Application

This Application must be addressed to the Principal Officer of the Agency concerned.

Advice on Application

The agency will advise you on its decision to for access within 45 days of receipt of this application.

Advice of Determination

The agency will undertake its internal review and advise you of its decision within 14 days of receipt of this application.

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: / /

### Application for Review Of Determination Under Freedom of Information Act

Details of Applicant

Surname \_\_\_\_\_ (Title) \_\_\_\_\_

Given Names \_\_\_\_\_

Australian Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_

Details of FOI Reference Number

Telephone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

I have submitted an application requesting access to documents in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

I am unhappy with the determination made by your agency and seek a review of this determination because:

Place a tick in the appropriate box

- I have been refused access to a document but access has been deferred
- I have been refused access to part of a document
- I have been refused a request to amend a personal document
- I have been given access to a document but access has been deferred
- I believe I have been charged too much
- I am a third party specified in the documents but have not been consulted about giving access to another person
- I have been consulted but disagree with a decision to release the documents

Comments

You may include additional comments (attach pages if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_

The agency granted me a 50% reduction in fees and charges when I applied for access to documents.

Place a tick in the appropriate box

Yes

If yes, there is a \$20 fee

No

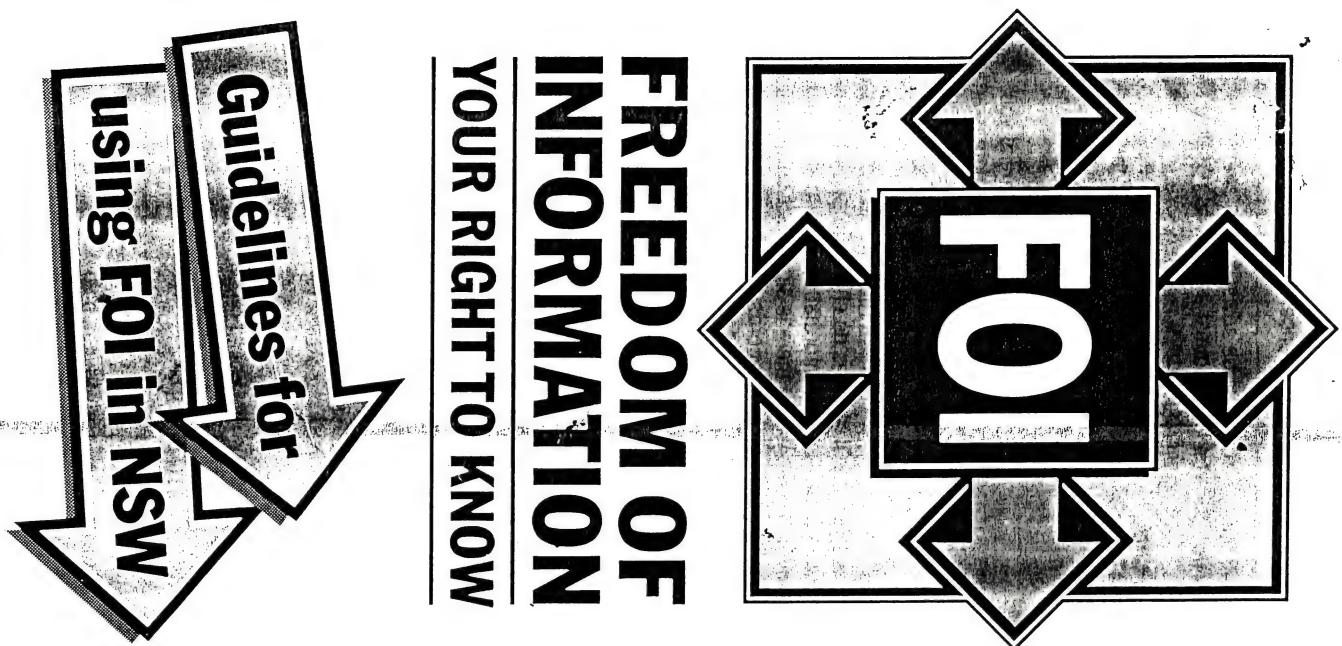
If no, there is a \$40 fee

Lodgement of Application

This application must be addressed to the Principal Officer of the Agency concerned within 28 days of the date of the agency's determination which is the subject of review.

Advice of Determination

The agency will undertake its internal review and advise you of its decision within 14 days of receipt of this application.



## What is Freedom of Information?

In New South Wales, the Freedom of Information Act 1989 gives you the legal right to:

- Obtain access to information held as records by State Government agencies, Government Ministers, local government and other public bodies;
- Request amendments to records of a personal nature that are inaccurate; and
- Appeal against a decision not to grant access to information or to amend personal records.

This leaflet provides you with broad guidelines for using Freedom of Information.

For further information on your rights to have a decision on your FOI request reviewed or to seek an appeal, see the leaflet called: "Reviews and Appeals".

## What sort of Information can I ask for?

You can ask for any kind of personal or non-personal information.

Personal information includes your public education and school records, health, welfare and superannuation records, and examination and training records.

Non-personal information includes government policy documents, research materials, instruction and procedure manuals, and market research and product testing records.

Information can be in the form of certificates, files, computer printouts, maps, films, photographs, tape recordings and video recordings.

At local government level you are only entitled to access information about your personal affairs.

## How do I request Information?

Every day government and other public bodies respond to requests for general information from the public. This process will still be your first avenue of access to the information you wish to see.

To make an FOI request, however, take the following steps:

1. Identify the information or document that you would like to see;
2. Identify which agency or organisation is likely to keep that information. If you are unsure about the agency concerned, contact the agency's FOI officer or the Government Information Service.

## Is any Information not available?

Under the Freedom of Information Act, wherever possible, agencies are required to make information available.

You may be denied right of access to information only where, for example, there is a legitimate need for confidentiality or where another person's privacy may be invaded. This information is called "exempt" and includes:

- State Government cabinet and executive council documents (with the exception of those that are factual or statistical and do not disclose cabinet or executive council deliberations or decisions);
- Documents which are exempt under Commonwealth or Victorian FOI legislation (the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments have already introduced FOI);
- Documents concerning law enforcement and public safety;
- Documents subject to legal professional privilege; and
- Documents subject to secrecy provisions in other legislation.
- Other information which may be exempt includes documents affecting:
  - Personal affairs of another person;
  - Business affairs of another person or business; and
  - The economy of the State.
- The Premier of NSW, as the Minister responsible for FOI, has the right to issue a Ministerial Certificate stating that a specific document is exempt and restricted.

## Guidelines for using FOI in NSW

- What agencies and other public bodies can give me this information?
- Local and municipal councils. [ personal information only
- County councils.
- Universities.
- Colleges of advanced education.
- Public hospitals.
- Regulatory bodies eg the Harness Racing Authority.

- Remember, there is separate Freedom of Information legislation for Federal Government (Commonwealth), NSW State Government legislation does not cover Commonwealth agencies;
- Write your request on an FOI application form (available from all government agencies) or in a letter and post or deliver it to the agency concerned;
- Provide as much information as possible about the document you wish to see, such as file reference numbers; and
- Enclose the \$30 fee for your application.

your personal affairs. There is no upper limit on fees.

**Rebates:**

- Rebates of 50 per cent are offered on all charges:
  - For pensioners with the Health Benefit Card as well as those with an equivalent income who are under financial hardship;
  - For non-profit organisations under financial hardship;
  - Where public interest can be demonstrated; and
  - For Children.

Ensure that your address is included for correspondence.

- You must be advised of an agency decision on your request as soon as possible and within 45 days.
- If your request is refused, reasons must be given. You will be advised of the agency's findings and your rights to appeal against the decision. (See the leaflet called: "Reviews and Appeals" for further details).
- If the agency refuses to amend your records, you may ask that a note is attached outlining the details of your requested corrections.

- What will the agency do when it receives my request for correction?**
- What will it cost to ask for correction of documents about me?**

- Once you have received documents under FOI, there is no charge to apply to have personal information in them amended.
- Where there is significant correction of personal records and the mistakes were not your fault, all fees and charges paid for the original application will be fully refunded.

- All agencies (except local government) are required to publish information about their operation called a "Statement of Affairs".
- These statements will include details on:
  - Agency structures and functions;
  - How its operations affect the public;
  - How members of the public can participate in formulation of its policies;
  - Descriptions of all policy documents held by the agency; and
  - An outline of the procedures for gaining access to those documents.

- The Act allows 12 months, after it's implementation, for preparation of these statements.
- A regularly updated "Summary of Affairs" must also be published in the Government Gazette.

- Most Government agencies have an FOI officer who can help you with any queries.
- If you are unsure about the agency concerned, contact the Government Information Service on (02) 228 8900 or the FOI Unit on (02) 223 6200.
- Toll free on (008) 04 4051.

**Can an agency refuse to give me the information I request?**

- Yes. A request for information may be refused:
  - If the document is exempt;
  - If it would unreasonably divert the agency's resources from its normal functions. (However, before refusing a request, the agency must offer to help to amend the application so that work may be carried out without disruption);
  - If an agency believes you may be seriously affected by personally accessing information relating to your physical or mental health. (You can ask that your medical doctor looks at the information and tells you about it); and
  - If non-personal documents you wish to see were created before July 1, 1984.

- You have the legal right to appeal against a decision on any of these with the exception of "unreasonable diversion of agency resources". (See the leaflet called: "Reviews and Appeals" for further information).

- Yes. If you believe any information about you is incomplete, incorrect, misleading, or out-of-date, you have the right to request that it is corrected.

- Who can help me with more information or if I have any problems understanding FOI?
  - Applications for correction to a document should be made using an FOI amendment request form or in a letter. If you have any information to support your request, include this with your application.
  - Post or deliver your application to the agency or organisation which gave you access to your file or documents.

- What will I receive the information that I have requested?**
- If the information you request is in written form, the agency can let you know when and where you can see the documents or provide you with a copy.
- If you have asked for access to information that is not in written form, such as video tapes, sound recordings or photographs, arrangements will be made for you to hear or view the material.

- Charges fall into two categories - application fees and processing fees.
- Application fees:
- A \$30 fee covers applications for both personal and non-personal information.

- Processing fees:
- Processing fees cover time for locating the information, decision-making, consultation where necessary and any photocopying.
- A \$30 an hour fee covers processing for both personal and non-personal information. However, you are entitled to up to 20 hours of free processing time for requests about

**How much will it cost me to make a request for information?**

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## WHAT IS ANARCHISM ?

How would you feel if you discovered that the society in which you would really like to live was already here, apart from a few little, local difficulties like exploitation, war, dictatorship and starvation? An anarchist society, a society which organises itself without authority, is always in existence, buried beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism and its waste, privilege and its injustices, nationalism and its suicidal loyalties, religious differences and their superstitious separatism.

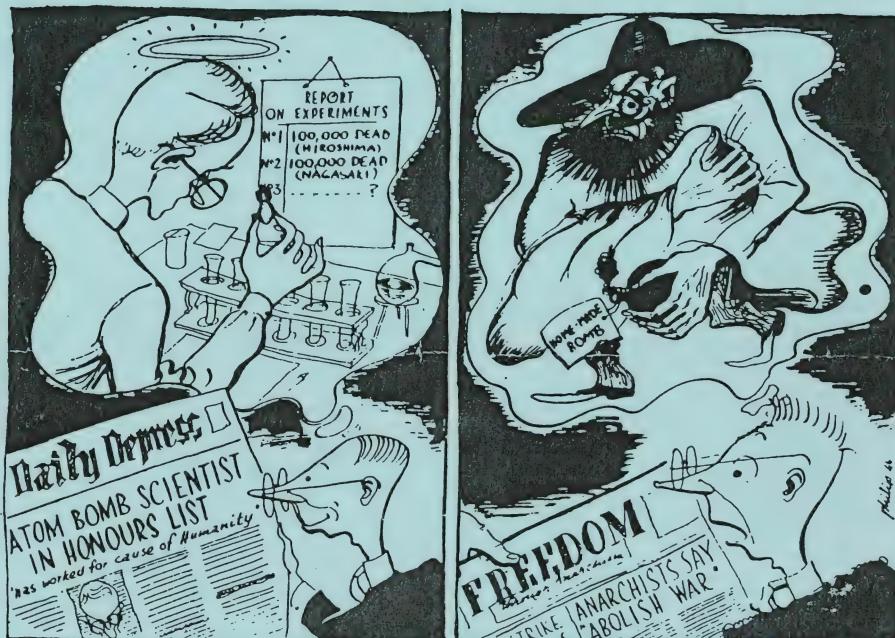
Colin Ward

The word 'anarchy' (Greek *an-archos*, rule by none) is often used to mean social chaos, unconstitutional government, or domination by rival marauding gangs. We know of no-one who advocates 'anarchy' in any of these senses. Anarchists certainly do not.

Anarchists advocate anarchy in the sense of nobody being boss over anybody else.

Anarchism stems from the conviction that the purpose of society is to increase individual opportunities. For a totally isolated individual, the only choice would be, either to do what is necessary to stay alive, or to die. In a healthy society, each individual makes use of the others, and freedom of choice is increased all round.

All voluntary co-operation is healthy, in the sense of fulfilling the purpose of society. Organisation is healthy, so long as people are doing what they want, and not being forced by the organisation to do something they do not wish to do. Leadership is healthy, so long as it is leadership in the sense of innovation which others freely copy, and not 'leader-



Cartoon from *Freedom*, January 1946. The 'anarchist bomber', mostly invented by Joseph Conrad in *The Secret Agent* (1907), has survived as a bogey man in the public imagination through forty years, during which Europe had twice been devastated by government bombers.

In the last forty years the silly idea that anarchists are maniacs bent on destruction has been somewhat dispelled. But the other silly idea, that governments consist of sane people bent on peace, seems as strong as ever.

ship' as a euphemism for being the boss.

Socially unhealthy institutions are those which go against the purpose of society, by forcing some people to act against their will. Anarchists oppose every kind of coercive institution, including states, armies, slavery, the wages system, prisons, gangsters, nuclear bombs, money, patriarchy, matriarchy, theocracy and revolutionary governments.

Of course, nobody expects a change from a world full of governments to a world without government overnight. There must be a transition period, and

the transition period is now. We need not worry yet about the problems facing a coercion-free society. It is obvious that the society we live in is more coercive than necessary, so let us make it a little less coercive than it would otherwise have been.

There are those who purport to have the same aims as anarchists, who ask to be put in power to speed up the transition. They are frauds. You cannot get rid of coercion by means of coercion.

Anarchism is opposed to bosses and governments of every kind.

# NO NAUGHTINESS PLEASE, WE'RE THE ABC

• • •

The date Friday 22nd June will go down in Australian television history. This is the date that on Countdown, Revolution the supposed cutting edge of youth television, hosts Tania Lacy and Mark Little honestly informed their audience about the machinations of the program. This included giving the studio audience members placards stating "This Is All A Con" and "TV Sucks". This behaviour was deemed unacceptable and the repercussions were felt straight away as both hosts were sacked. ABC bosses laid claims that the two had hi-jacked the show by:

- ignoring orders from production staff telling viewers that some bands mimed songs
- telling viewers that some parts of the show were not live
- ABC spokesman John Rose stated in the Sun newspaper, dated 27 June 1998, "Lacy and Little acted contrary to the directions of Countdown Revolution's director and executive producer. They were asked to provide an explanatory by Monday. They didn't. They were given a chance".

Whilst Lacy and Little were off the air program reporters James Young and Robbie James played hosts for an evening, as did the Doug Anthony Allstars.

The case was heard at the Industrial Royal Commission yesterday with Lucy and Little being represented by Actor's Equity. but due to the fact that the outcome between the two parties was "... a basic disagreement on the future direction of the show ..." nothing was resolved. The bottom line being that Tania Lacy and Mark Little are officially no longer associated with the program. It is still uncertain as to who the new hosts will be.

"It is not a situation of winning or losing", explained Tania, "but we are disappointed that the ABC was not willing to meet with us to talk further. We offered to speak to the production crew and make a public apology if required, but they weren't interested".

"The whole situation is like being put in an adventure playground and then being caned for playing too much ... the ABC encouraged me for so many years to do that sort of stuff ..." she added, "I'll put this down to experience, but I'm quite excited about the opportunity to explore my creative ability. I want to keep growing as an artist".

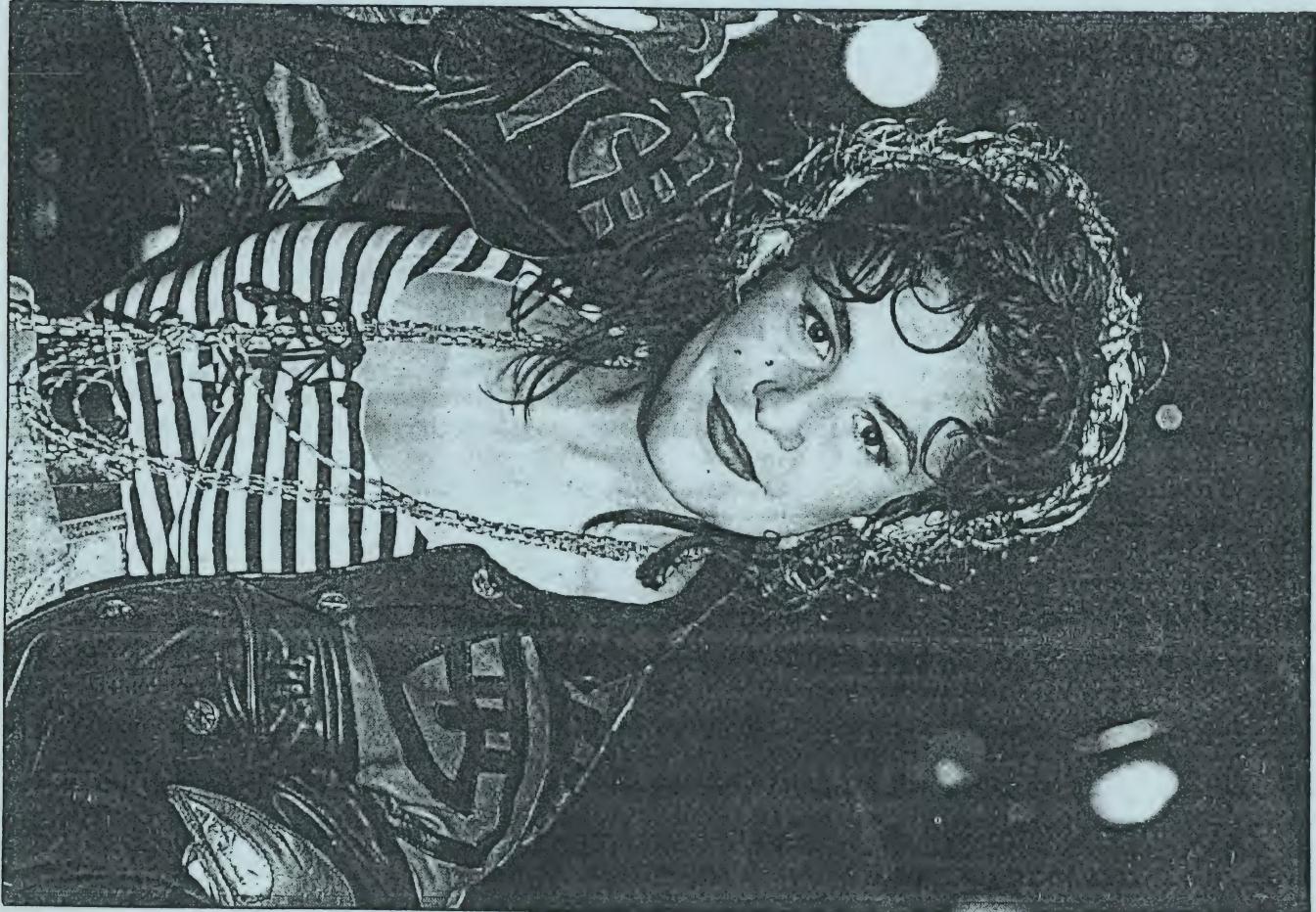
"I feel cheated professionally", stated Mark Little, "I was brought onto the show for ideas for entertainment, to help bring up the ratings. I couldn't believe it when the show rated a 2 and people were popping champagne corks!"

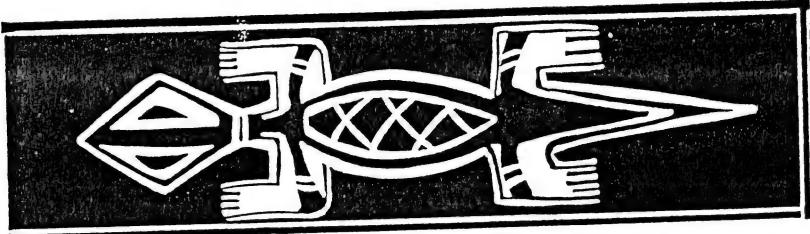
The moral of the story is honestly may not necessarily be through the eyes of a young teenager. If this situation is anything to go by.

Oh, by the way, keep an eye out for T-shirts that will appear on the market soon bearing the slogan "No Gimmicks Please, We're History!" ... guess where they are coming from ...

— CRAIG KAMBER

TANIA LACY





*Robert Mapplethorpe's defiant photography has turned an American museum into an official crime scene.*

**D**ennis Barrie, museum director and specialist in American art, was invited this past spring to lead a cultural delegation to Kharkov in the Ukraine, U.S.S.R. He was asked to arrange cultural exchanges between the United States and the Soviet Union, and to speak on the development and function of the arts in a free society. But as the former Iron Curtain countries were turning toward freedom, Barrie had to cancel his trip because he was facing a prison term for a museum exhibit in Cincinnati.

At 2:30 P.M., April 7, the police closed the doors of Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center, charging the museum and Barrie, its director, with pandering obscenity and the misuse of a minor in pornography. The offending works were seven photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe included in a 175-piece retrospective of the artist's work, titled *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment*. If convicted, Barrie faces fines and a stay in jail. H. Louis Sirkin, Barrie's lawyer, can't remember another instance when the cops have busted a museum: "It's a protected place, like libraries and universities, for research or artistic purposes."

Two of the contested photographs are portraits of children, one of a boy in the nude and the other a girl with her skirt askew (each taken with the permission of the child's parents). The now 19-year-old boy, Jesse McBride, says his mother "was friends with Robert . . . I would run around naked a lot at that age. I'd stop and he'd snap a shot. . . . It never occurred to me that

it would be a big deal." *New York Times* columnist Andy Grundberg called the girl's photo "guileless and charming." Five other photos, from Mapplethorpe's *X Portfolio*, depict explicit, consensual, adult homosexual acts, more clinical than erotic.

The remainder of the exhibit—on an otherwise uneventful tour from Philadelphia, Hartford, Chicago, and Berkeley, California, and on its way to Boston—is comprised of adult portraits and, one of Mapplethorpe's favorite subjects, flowers.

Throwing more than 400 visitors out of the Contemporary Arts Center (C.A.C.), the police spent the next hour videotaping the exhibit as evidence for the prosecution. Some 1,500 people gathered outside to protest. Among them were Donald and Carolyn Balleison of Louisville, Kentucky, who had come to Cincinnati to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. The city seemed a natural choice, with its impressive orchestra and ballet, conservatory and museums. The Balleisons planned to eat at the city's five-star restaurant and take in a few exhibits.

Instead they came across the police raid, which, Carolyn said, reminded her of "Germany, 1932." Apparently, several of the protesters shared Mrs. Balleison's observation. Pressed against the C.A.C. door, the crowd shouted continuously for nearly two hours, making the Nazi salute to emphasize the analogy and chanting, "Not the church, not the state, we decide what art is great" and, more cynically, "Let's go burn the library," "Maybe Khomeini should come to Cincinnati," and finally, "Cincinnati Nazi."

A man standing next to Mrs. Balleison told her that



# CINCINNATI CITY UNDER SIEGE

BY MARCIA PALLY

PENTHOUSE Sept  
1990



*The director of Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center was invited to lead a cultural delegation to the Soviet Union. Instead, he faces a jail term. He sees a "national agenda by the radical Right to control not only what goes on in my museum, but what goes on in your home."*

the Ku Klux Klan had marched in nearby Oxford, Ohio, that morning, and wondered what the police were doing here. When the C.A.C. doors reopened at 4:10 P.M., the crowd broke into the national anthem.

"At least they didn't padlock the museum or confiscate the pictures," said Barrie. "We knew a grand jury had been through in the morning when the exhibit opened, and we knew vice was coming. We knew when they left the courthouse, when they stopped for lunch. We had no idea what they would do and all we could do is wait."

"Let me tell you, no matter what anyone says, the thought of going to jail is terribly frightening when it's you who's actually going." Barrie is a steady, soft-spoken man with elegantly clipped white hair and beard. Baronial in his well-cut suits and fashionable suspenders, he does not go in for roughhousing. "I'm a museum curator," he said. "I did not want to be taken out in handcuffs." A skirmish erupted briefly when the police tried to prevent a radio reporter from moving through the crowd. No one was hurt.

While more than 80,000 people visited *The Perfect Moment* during its seven-week run and museum membership is up 80 percent, the C.A.C. stands to lose considerable sums over the Mapplethorpe show. No public moneys were used to sponsor the exhibit, and last March the C.A.C. withdrew from Cincinnati's annual Fine Arts Fund, which raises money for more than half a dozen local cultural institutions. Barrie feared that the inclusion of the suddenly controversial C.A.C. would hamper the fund's ability to raise support for other beneficiaries.

A native of Cleveland, Barrie considers himself an "informed liberal person, not in the radical class by any means," whose greatest moment of controversy prior to the Mapplethorpe excitement was the installation of a bicentennial sculpture featuring four pigs—in honor of Cincinnati's past as the meat-packing capital of America—that offended a few citizens who wanted "a classier image," Barrie said. Barrie holds a doctorate in American cultural history from Wayne State University in Michigan and a master's degree from Ohio's Oberlin College. Before his position at the C.A.C., he worked with the Archives of American Art for the Smithsonian Institution, first in Washington, D.C., and then as Midwest area director in Detroit, where he met his wife Diane. They have two sons, Ian, 11, and Kevin, eight.

Barrie booked *The Perfect Moment* in late 1988, before the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., canceled its Mapplethorpe exhibit on "fearing loss of its National Endowment for the Arts grant. And before Senator Jesse Helms tried to ban N.E.A. funding for any work that offends "the adherents of a particular religion or nonreligion," as the Helms bill specified.

"As soon as the Helms uproar started," Barrie said, "I knew we'd have a rocky ride in Cincinnati—letters to the editor and the like. But I didn't expect a coordinated onslaught against the institution. And I never thought I'd end up in a court of law."

Never a boomtown Cincinnati made its money in the last century with salt-of-the-earth industries—food processing, machine tools, rails—and grew steadily, attracting conservative spenders of German stock, to its current population of 1.4 million. Unlike many American cities, it has no single large ghetto. Working-class neighborhoods make their way between quaint middle-class clapboards and the impressive mansions of the corporate elite. Cincinnati's top businesses today include General Electric and Proctor & Gamble. Executives of the latter, and of Peat Marwick corporation, remained on the C.A.C. board during the Mapplethorpe fracas, but "it's understood," said Barrie, "that other companies should no longer be approached."

Cincinnati was also home to Charles Keating, who 30 years ago began his campaign against "indecency." After successfully prosecuting a candy-store owner for selling adult magazines, Keating founded Citizens for Decent Literature, which later became Citizens for Decency Through Law. Keating is now under investigation for the billions of taxpayer dollars required to bail out his Lincoln Savings and Loan depositors. It appears that while Keating was crusading against what he termed indecency, he was quietly making millions of dollars in S & L investments.

Keating is not Cincinnati's only crusader. This March, before the Mapplethorpe exhibit had even hit town, a newer local group called Citizens for Community Values (C.C.V.) began agitating against his work.

C.C.V. was founded in 1983 by Dr. Jerry Kirk, director of the National Coalition Against Pornography, also headquartered in Cincinnati. National Right to Life President John Willke also makes his home in Cincinnati, as do the organizations People United Against



Pornography, STOP (Stand Together Opposing Pornography), and the National Consultation on Pornography, which received training from Donald Wildmon's American Family Association. C.C.V. is currently headed by Monty Lobb, Jr., a graduate of Olivet Nazarene University and the University of Dayton Law School. It was Lobb's father who had approached Kirk about combating "the growing evil of pornography" in Cincinnati.

A March 1990 C.C.V. internal memo recommends applying "peer and financial pressure" to keep Mapplethorpe's photos out of Cincinnati. The group launched a massive letter-writing campaign, sponsored full-page newspaper ads, and urged county prosecutors to close the exhibit by police action.

Opposition to the exhibit escalated, with threats to cut support for the arts—especially from a proposed arts center in the downtown area—and for the Contemporary Arts Center in particular. Special pressure was levied against the Central Trust Company, where C.A.C. Board Chairman Chad Wick was employed, including a disinformation campaign claiming that Central Trust financially backed the Mapplethorpe show. In one of their more inventive moments, opposition groups urged their constituencies to send in Central Trust bank cards cut in two. In mid-March, Wick resigned from the C.A.C. board to take the pressure off Central Trust, though no Central Trust money was used for the Mapplethorpe display.

A recent issue of C.C.V.'s newsletter lists its accomplishments in 1989, among them: persuading Rite Aid Drugs to remove adult magazines such as *Playboy* and *Penthouse* from its 1,400 stores nationwide, developing chapters in eight counties that survey local video stores for adult material, attempting to persuade video-store owners to remove adult tapes voluntarily, assisting in the prosecutions of 20 video-store owners in three states, preventing cable programs with adult programming from entering the Cincinnati area, and initiating a boycott against Bonded and Speedway gas marts for their sale of *Playboy* and *Penthouse*.

The *Cincinnati Post* reported on March 24 that members of the Contemporary Arts Center board who agreed to talk to the press about the opposition's tactics asked to remain anonymous "for fear of economic intimidation against their employers and businesses."

Perhaps expectedly, museum directors and art critics across the country have supported the C.A.C. and the Mapplethorpe show. The comment by Martin Friedman, director of Minneapolis's Walker Art Center, that nothing in today's art world "has ever compared to this" is typical. But the response to the controversy by local residents is more telling: In a *Cincinnati Post* poll of Hamilton County, 59 percent of the respondents said that the exhibit should have its day in town. Karen Widder told the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, "This is my hometown; I was born and raised here . . . I don't see what the big deal is." Dayton Merritt of Covington, Kentucky, told the *Cincinnati Post* that he found some of the photos "too personal for public exhibit. But they have a right to be shown. Freedom is what this [exhibit] is all about, and that's what *this* was all about," pointing to his "Vietnam Vet" baseball cap. "That's what I fought for." Mark Phillips and Richard Rubin of Columbus waited for three hours to see the exhibit and called the photos "great." Estelle Fischer of Pleasant Ridge especially liked the male nudes. Marla Steiner of Dayton called the police action, not the photos, "a personal affront."

Garda Mann, a native of Cincinnati and mother of two, explained that she had always thought society limited personal freedom and that the line should be drawn between porn and art. "But they," she said, "were trying to draw the line. Who are they to make that decision for me, for any of us? Closed minds produce mediocre ideas. This Mapplethorpe business makes you think of 1984, and you wonder if Cincinnati isn't some test case to see how much people can be controlled."

Cathy Marucci of the Mt. Adams neighborhood in Cincinnati told the *Cincinnati Post* that "people have been taking photos of nude women for years. Now people are finally taking pictures of men, and everyone's getting upset."

David Ross, director of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, which is currently exhibiting *The Perfect Moment*, believes that homophobia is a bottom line in the fray. "There have been dozens of artists who have photographed naked children," he said. "But they have never been photographed by someone who has been identified as an overtly homosexual male. So because he [Mapplethorpe] was gay and photographed a naked child, ipso facto he becomes somehow involved in pandering, pederasty, or child pornography."

BY JEFFREY L. BROWN



*The attorneys for the Contemporary Arts Center see the repression on a personal level. "It comes down to what bothers the cops, personally," says Sirkin. "There's no harm that comes from viewing sexual material. . . . There's no objective standard, so you resort to subjective ones."*





*The president of the board of the Contemporary Arts Center. "The right wing," he says, "believes that what it's doing is right and so above the democratic process. I don't think they've ever considered whether their actions are in keeping with the Constitution or with democracy itself."*



phy. If it was by a heterosexual, it would be just 'charming.'

Considering the motives of his opponents, Barrie said, "There would have been some right-wing outcry had the photos been of women, or of a man and a woman, but not as grand an outcry. Men still call most of the shots in our society and most men are threatened by homosexuality AIDS is just the latest excuse."

"Men are always in some race with other men about penis size," Barrie continued. "They're threatened by the genitalia in the photos, and they're so afraid of being thought homosexual they go to any lengths to prove they aren't. So they end up repressing anything that brings homosexuality into the open. The ones who are the most afraid scream the loudest."

"The other reason," said Barrie, "that the right wing finds Mapplethorpe so upsetting is race. His pictures portray black men with dignity and power, and that's hard for many whites to take. Remember Jesse Helms screaming on the floor of Congress last summer about the photo of a black and a white man embracing. We've had a higher percentage of black visitors to the Mapplethorpe exhibit than to any other, including shows of black artists."

The state of Ohio no longer has sodomy laws against homosexual acts, and Terry Flanigan, of the local chapter of ACT UP (an AIDS activist group), believes gay life is tolerated in Cincinnati as much as it is in Columbus or Indianapolis. Gay news and culture magazines can be purchased at a few downtown newsstands. Gay sexual material is as restricted as heterosexual fare. In the Cincinnati area, no adult videos of any sort can be sold or rented. The city has no adult bookstores or X-rated adult cable entertainment, even if one chooses it for private viewing in one's home and is willing to pay for it. In his column in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, James Lileks called Cincinnati the place "where you can be arrested for thinking of a banana and a doughnut in the same thought." No magazines featuring hard-core material are permitted, and those soft-core magazines that can be sold are available on a few downtown news racks but not in convenience, grocery, or drugstores. Gothic romances such as *Terms of Surrender*, *The Pistooleer*, and *Mrs. Ward's Refusal* are more widely found, with their many antebellum-gowned, open-throated, and swooning ladies on the covers. The periodicals *True Detective*,

*Front Page Detective*, and *Inside Detective* are also casually available, sporting stories of mayhem and photos of corpses on the newsprint inside.

Local newspapers covering the Mapplethorpe fracas preceded their articles with "explicit language" warnings. In order to keep sexually related phone services out of town, Cincinnati Bell canceled all 976 exchanges, including chess and "gab" lines. The Cincinnati Public Library segregates material into its adult-book room where library cardholders under the age of 18 may not go without written parental permission and a specially stamped card. (The national American Library Association discourages labeling by age in the belief that librarians should not decide for an entire community which books will be banished to the X-rated room. "Should it be sex or sexism?" asked the head of the ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom.)

"We don't have censorship," said the library's director of public relations. In 1971 the library board adopted a policy that very carefully governs all acquisitions. We haven't had trouble because we make sure to follow it."

Though the recently X-rated art film *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* played Cincinnati in an art theater near the university, the city's newspapers would not carry the ad for it. In late April, County Sheriff Simon Leis, Jr., threatened to prosecute anyone selling the new 2 Live Crew album.

So for adult entertainment, Cincinnatians . . . drive. Until a few years ago, it was possible to buy magazines and videos in neighboring Newport, Kentucky, but local "decency" sweeps have flattened what used to be Cincinnati's playground to a sandbox. Only a few clubs remain—where women dance in G-strings and tassels—crowded, club managers say, with guys driving cars with Ohio license plates. "We see all kinds," said one dancer, "lawyers, judges, stockbrokers, car dealers, insurance salesmen. . . . Those Cincinnati men support us well."

About the Newport strip, C.C.V. spokesman Phil Burress said, "[There are] still parts that aren't clean. We want to get all eight counties surrounding Cincinnati clean of sexually oriented businesses. What we're trying to do is get it as far away from here as possible."

Adult videos and magazines are available to Cincinnatians in outlying Butler and Clermont counties, or in Dayton, Lexington, Columbus, and In-

## WE ARE ENTERING A NEW ERA IN REPRESSION, BY NAT HENTOFF

In Cincinnati on April 7—for the first time in American history—police entered a museum, the Contemporary Arts Center, cleared the galleries of all visitors, and closed the doors.

The arts center became an official crime scene as the cops videotaped the exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe photographs. This "evidence" became the basis for another first in American history—criminal indictments against the arts center and its director, Dennis Barrie, for pandering obscenity. If convicted, Barrie could be imprisoned for a year and fined \$2,000, while the museum could be fined \$10,000.

Until now, museums have been considered immune from the thought police. But that is no longer true. The Cincinnati precedent now holds museums to be in the same category as adult bookstores and movie theaters showing films that inflame such organizations as Citizens for Community Values, which tried to prevent the Mapplethorpe photographs from being displayed in Cincinnati.

The additional crucial significance of the criminal indictments of Dennis Barrie and the Contemporary Arts Center is their effect—already—on other museums around the country. The photographs moved on to the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, where a spokesman told *The New York Times* that "because of the seizure of the exhibit [in Cincinnati], it creates some stress on our staff."

And how many arts centers will be willing from now on to risk criminal indictments as a result of other paintings and photographs

that arouse those who are continually on the scent of "obscenity"—and their law-enforcement allies?

H. Louis Sirkin, attorney for Cincinnati's beleaguered Contemporary Arts Center, points out that there are states—among them Louisiana, South Carolina, and North Carolina—where an obscenity offense is a felony rather than a misdemeanor, as in Cincinnati. How many museum directors and boards of trustees in such states will want to take a chance on being locked up for years because of a work of art that a jury says appeals to their prurient interests?

Sirkin makes another point. Barrie is being treated as a criminal, and this is not likely to have gone unnoticed among boards of trustees of arts centers throughout the country.

"Museums, galleries, and arts centers," says Sirkin, "used to be financially supported by eccentric, wealthy patrons. They were true believers in artistic integrity. They'd fight to protect it, and they didn't care what anybody else said or thought. But these institutions are now being taken over by foundations, and foundations are largely administered by banks and invest-

ment firms. These people do not want controversy. They're worried about the corporate image, not the integrity of the individual artist."

A case in point was the resignation—due to the Mapplethorpe controversy—of Chad Wick, the board chairman of Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center. Pressure had been exerted on his employer, the Central Trust Company. This company was not involved in the exhibit that is being prosecuted for obscenity, but Mr. Wick was. Thereby he was "tainting" his employer.

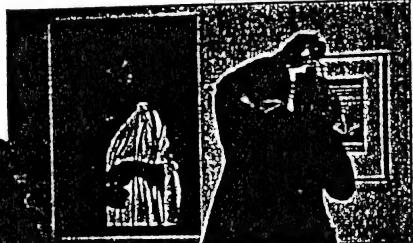
However the Cincinnati case comes out, we have entered a new era in the pursuit of alleged obscenity and pornography in the United States. Not only X-rated films and various magazines are vulnerable. The arts establishment—including its prestigious museums and museum directors—is now subject to sudden visits by armed critics, writing down their shocked reviews of exhibits and handing out subpoenas.

Perhaps now that leaders of the art world see one of their number threatened with prison as an alleged panhandler of obscenity, they will better understand—and speak up for—late Supreme Court justice William O. Douglas's utterly clear and logical position on all of this:

"There are as many different definitions of obscenity as there are men,



**The raid should indicate the inescapable long-range result of trying to criminalize expression.**



and they are as unique to the individual as his dreams. . . . Obscenity—which even we [on the Supreme Court] cannot define with precision—is a hodgepodge. To send men to jail for violating standards they cannot understand, construe, and apply is a monstrous thing to do in a nation dedicated to fair trials and due process."

That includes the owner of an adult bookstore, the maker of X-rated films, and the director of Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center. —

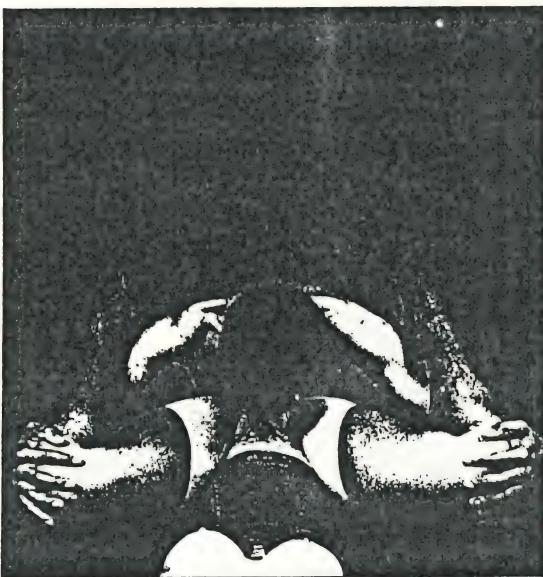
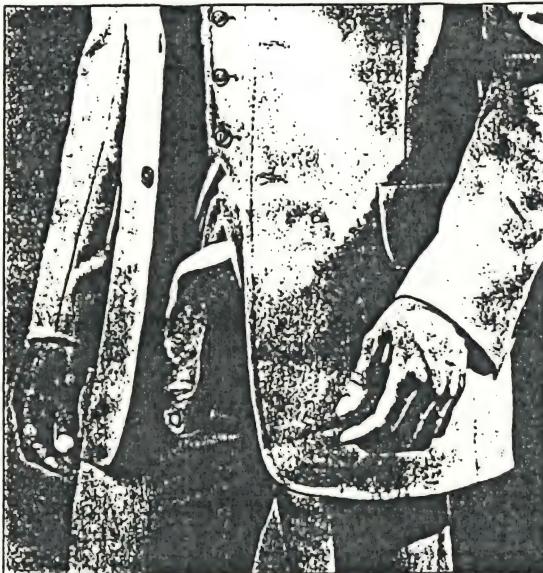
In a late poem, Jorge Luis Borges thanks the gathering darkness of *amaurosis* for rescuing him from the *prolixity of the real*: What is poetically singular is to be discerned by its disengagement from the world's plurals, necessarily prosaic. In any consideration of an artist's work, something of these constraints, these sundarings, must be invoked, even when it is the *prolixity of the unreal* which throngs the photographer's images, a congestion of fantasy and obsession. For in even the most schematic and fixated achievement, more meets the eye and the lens than the mind can discriminate. . . .

Robert Mapplethorpe differs perhaps from other artists in photography by an insistence upon the darkness: If other photographers are artists precisely insofar as they see the *light* and register its capacity to seize and transform our response to the world, Mapplethorpe would be the photographer who sees the darkness. As he said in 1986, with suggestive grammatical disregard: "My work is about seeing—seeing things like they haven't been seen before."

I have presumed to say that he sees a particular darkness through three subjects: through flowers, through faces, through figures, discarding the prolixity, then, of the real and discarding the prolixity of the unreal. When we are not prolix (which means when we are not liquid), then we are concise (which means we are crystalline), and this indeed is Mapplethorpe's quality and his goal: to restore potency to flowers, to restore aesthetic dignity to the genitals, and to restore form to identity—and in so doing to set his images before us in such a way that we realize that what might never have been seen at all can never be seen as anything but what it appears. Which is, as Paul Valéry used to say, the realization of the beautiful. . . . Flowers are the sexual organs of plants. In all Mapplethorpe's photographs of flowers I have seen, they are no longer a growing member of

plants, but dismembered from them, their provisional status emphasized, their duration on *sufferance* . . . not destined for any completion of their cycle. . . . Yet if Mapplethorpe's flowers are never shown in any kind of fertile continuity, neither are they seen to have any traffic with mortality—no

with no basis in fact—to *perfection*, in their heightened, erectile state, engorged with the liquids which make them such solids, driven through the green fuse by that force which, Dylan Thomas wrote, drives our human age as well. In these images, which are never afforded a landscape or even a setting where the condition of Being indoors might be implied by the absence of weather or world, withholding any object that might serve as a reference of scale, the flowers are indeed fetishized so that we must perceive them not only as the sexual organs they are, but as analogies to our own. In his 1985 collection *Black Flowers*, Mapplethorpe plays this game of equivalents in quite explicit terms, setting the flower studies opposite his highly genitalized male nudes, which counter a millennial convention of pelvic disregard or concealment—he insists that we confront what Yeats once called "the mystery which touches the genitals, a blurred touch through a curtain." But Mapplethorpe would focus that blurred touch, would compel us to see with the same focusing wonder the "expression" of the uncircumcised glans and the "assertion" of the cut flower. The penis, in all the images by Mapplethorpe I have seen, is never shown erect, the flower always so, its erethism undeterred "by any natural thing" (Yeats again. Mapplethorpe has certainly sailed to Byzantium, no country for old men indeed; unlike Rodin, his greatest rival in the adoration of "bodily shape," Mapplethorpe "sees" only the fulfilled, perfected physique as his subject, his satisfaction). . . . In these genital studies, human and botanical, something very intricate, very particular, and yet very generic is—I believe for the first time as a deliberate artistic manifestation—articulated, studied, with curious consequences for our conventions and decorums with regard to gender. . . . Indeed, much of Mapplethorpe's enterprise urges us to see the male genitals as *potential forms*



fallen petals, no withered or faded parts. Whatever their complexity of structure and fragility of substance, the flowers are shown—sometimes leaning into the shot from the side,

Above: "Man in Polyester Suit" (1980) and "Marty and Veronica" (1982).

of great delicacy and poise, paired with the thrusting, assertive, conventionally female figurations of flowers. What is spoken, Heidegger says, is never—and in no language—what is said. I might add: not even in the language of flowers. . . . Mapplethorpe's portraits, as he said when Susan Sontag asked what he does with himself when he poses, try to find that part of the subject which is self-confident. This is by no means a part of which the subject is readily conscious. We may identify Mapplethorpe's people if we are cognizant of certain social and artistic circles, otherwise we merely learn to know them as they appear. As early as 1971, he made the astonishing confession—or was it a challenge, even a defiance?—about his work as a portrait-maker: "I often don't know who these people are. It's not that important to me." . . . A Mapplethorpe portrait represents a power of the flesh as a Mapplethorpe flower constitutes an effigy of sacred assertion: It figures Being taken—posed, beguiled, inveigled by all the sortileges of darkness—to the very limits of itself, all that flesh is heir to without the connivance of circumstance. . . . What we call the *facial mask* has momentarily triumphed over individuality, over the personal, the human, and all that the merely human hides. Indeed, in the face of such an image I no longer know why we must praise an artist, a photographer, for being "human" when, as Mapplethorpe shows us, all that fulfills and completes humanity is inhuman, is superhuman . . . is divine? . . . In Mapplethorpe's photographs the world of inorganic form is absent save as it is defined by the organic. What we think of Leonardo's circle, and Leonardo's square inscribed within it, are evoked by many of the astonishing bodies. . . . In most instances, Mapplethorpe's images of the nude male are isolated, solitary. . . . Moreover, this single body itself will not be taken whole but cropped (literally, anatomized) so as to declare its symmetrical relations

intramurally, as it were, without reference to classical canons of wholeness, of completed form—rather, with regard to new proportions, new affinities, among them figures which include the genitals in unabashed exploration of what has always been treated as the body's disgraced member.



... "Seeing things like they haven't been seen before"—Mapplethorpe's words hover over all his nude figures, though I am convinced that the major revelation of these studies, the burden

Above: "Embrace" (1982) and "Brian Ridley and Lyle Heeter" (1970).

of their enormous effort—in which the camera is compelled to acknowledge desire with an avidity not just optic but haptic—is that of the body's implicit *energeia* to rise, to mount, to erect itself into an insurgent principle. . . .

The unified if never uniform impulse I would discern in Mapplethorpe's flowers, Mapplethorpe's faces, Mapplethorpe's figures is a continuous struggle, the contestation of hell. Solemnity of effigy is the consequence, I suppose, of a certain undecided outcome: Flowers spring up against their own weight; engorged with juice, they are never shown attached to the cycle which would make their momentary victory more than just that. Faces are transpicuous with energy, with appetite, yet there is always the gravity of the features, of the flesh which pulls, which *ponderates*, in the sense of bearing down what aspires to rise, to mount to expression, to identity. . . .

If I reach for such terms as transcendence, redemption, the apparatus of the sacred, it is because I used to think Mapplethorpe's photography was grim with the restrictive occasions of obsession and fetishism; but after a certain meditation, pondering their reasons and their realizations, I discern these pictures—a good share of them—to be emblems of contested mortality, grave with the contradictions of organic life in their aspiration to ecstasy, as crystalline in terms of their own art as the sonatas of Scarlatti or the last paintings of Mondrian, but as problematic, as imprecatory as any representation of the body I know, fond enemy and ally.

Richard Howard is a poet, critic, and translator. He is a member of the American Institute of Arts and Letters, and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1970 and the National Book Award for translation in 1983. This essay first appeared, in longer form, in Robert Mapplethorpe, published by Bullfinch Press. O+■



If one good has come out of this controversy, it is the growing realization of the artistic community that it can no longer count on the previously impenetrable walls of its museums to protect it from the grasping tentacles of the censor.

This development should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the history of censorship. The voracious appetite of the censor knows no satisfaction. Under our legal system, based as it is on precedent, the censor will generally begin by prosecuting disgusting material—such as kidie porn, bestiality, and similar smut—with which no decent person would want to be identified. Once the censorship precedent has been easily established with such material, the censor then applies it to the next most offensive genre of objectionable material, and then to the next!

Many museum artists and curators have aloofly observed this phenomenon from the sidelines, as if it had no possible impact on their protected world. As one lawyer in the Cincinnati case put it: "Six weeks [before the Mapplethorpe trial], museums and bona fide institutions were considered immune [from prosecution]. Suddenly, those presumptions have been stood on their

head. What arrogance! "Museums and bona fide institutions were considered immune"! Under our First Amendment, films, plays, books, and magazines are every bit as bona fide as the most elite museums.

If the censor is required to distinguish between "bona fide art" on the one hand and "smut" on the other, he (and increasingly she) will necessarily be given the power to judge what differentiates one from the other. Do we really want Jesse Helms and Andrea Dworkin dictating the bona fides of art, artists, and artistic institutions?

An important lesson from the Mapplethorpe imbroglio is that all freedom-loving and censorship-hating citizens—regardless of their tastes, politics, or preferences—must join the battle against the censor before he or she comes knocking at their door. By that time, it is always too late, because the precedent will have been established in someone else's case.

Now that the censors have penetrated the elite walls of the museums, perhaps the patrons and curators of those institutions—who would never be caught dead viewing an X-rated film or reading a skin magazine—will wake up the next time the censors' bell tolls and realize that "it tolls for thee." O+



THIS IS AN  
OBSCENE  
PHOTOGRAPH

dianapolis, respectively 47, 75, 100, and 110 miles away.

The history of Cincinnati's obscenity prosecutions goes back over 30 years—almost as long as sexually explicit material has been popularly available—beginning with Mr. Keating's candy-store victory in 1956. In the early seventies, Simon Leis, Jr. (then county prosecutor and later county sheriff) shut massage parlors with "nuisance abatements" and the help of Keating's Citizens for Decency Through Law. The state of Ohio passed an organized-crime law that converted obscenity laws that were unconstitutional to a felony. That law was upheld in a 1973 Supreme Court decision. The law was declared unconstitutional in 1978, but that ruling went after the plays *Ha! Ha! Dr. Gaskell!* and the film *Last Tango in Paris*.

In 1983 a grand jury indicted Warner Amex Cable Communications on four obscenity counts for showing two sexually explicit films on the Playboy Channel. (The charges were later withdrawn.) With the eighties video boom, stores in Hamilton, Clermont, and Warren counties were indicted for pandering obscenity with the intended chilling effect that keeps adult videos illegal or hard to come by. In 1988 the city of Cincinnati threatened to prosecute the Beastie Boys rock group. Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* never ran in a Cincinnati theater and many video stores there refuse to stock it. In 1988 the vice squad reviewed a production of *Equus* before Playhouse in the Park, a local theater company opened it to the public.

On April 9, 1990, the Cincinnati Post questioned whether Cincinnatians are more conservative than the rest of the nation, or if the city's reputation might be based more on "a handful of politicians and conservative leaders ... [who] have forged political careers championing anti-pornography causes." City council member Guy Guckenberger called obscenity prosecutions the traditional way for county prosecutors to attain "high visibility."

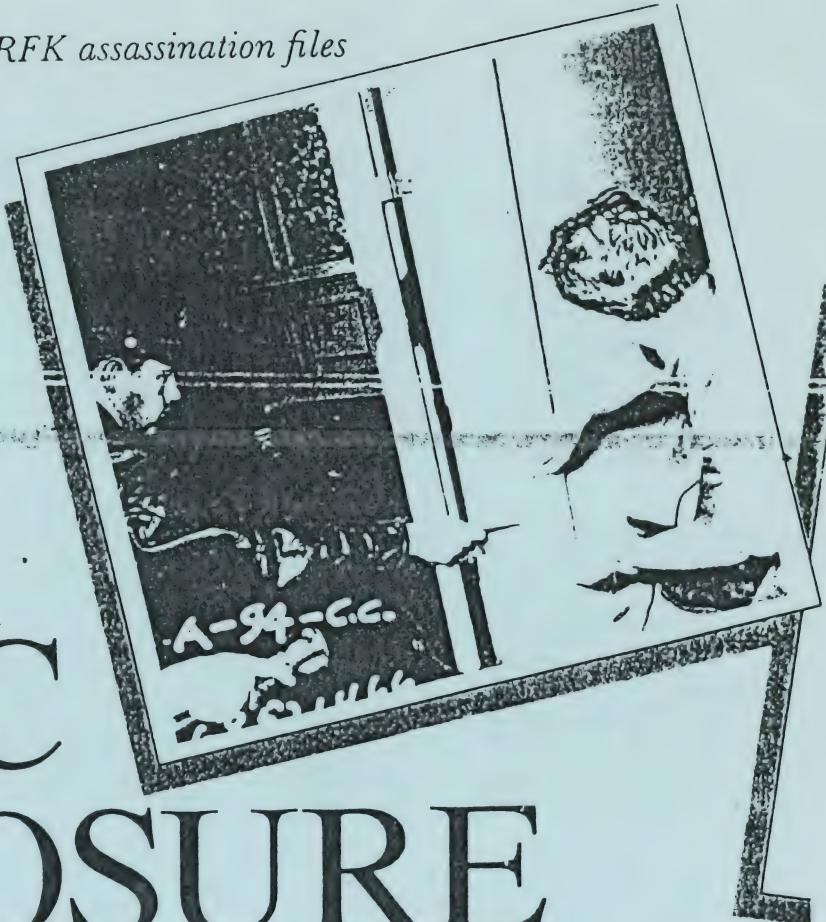




# REPRESSION BREEDS RESISTANCE



# The Politics of PUBLIC DISCLOSURE



By Philip H. Melanson

**D**ESPITE THE existence of the federal Freedom of Information Act and its state and local counterparts, the process for public disclosure and public access to government records remains highly political, within the legal/administrative rules of the game established by lawmakers and bureaucrats.

The experience of the Library Communications Center at Southeastern Massachusetts University in establishing its Robert F. Kennedy Assassination Archives suggests that institutional requests for access to government files, as opposed to requests by individual scholars made on their own behalf, have certain ad-

vantages in the freedom of information process. These advantages are not legal nor administrative so much as they are political.

## The quest for the RFK files

Our quest for release of government files relating to the 1968 assassination of presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy in Los Angeles began in 1984. As a scholar who had written on the subject of political violence, I became aware that what was arguably the richest private collection of materials concerning this historical tragedy was in need of a home.

Californian Floyd Nelson, who with the late Lillian Castellano founded the Kennedy Assassination Truth Committee in 1968, was determined that the 30 boxes of audio and videotapes, published works, transcripts, photographs, and exhibits be located at a university where students, faculty, and the public could access them.

Dean Janet C. Freedman and librarians at the Southern Massachusetts University Library determined that the collection would be a valuable resource for our academic community, and we took possession of it.



Philip H. Melanson is a Professor, Political Science Department, Southeastern Massachusetts University, North Dartmouth

## Obscured by official secrecy

In addition to its richness, the collection was important because the official files on the case remained obscured by a cloak of official secrecy. Despite controversies surrounding the event, questions of conspiracy, and questions about the validity of the official investigations, 95 percent of the files held by various investigating agencies remained inaccessible to the public. A few snippets of the official record gathered by the Kennedy Assassination Truth Committee were available.

This contrasted sharply with the public access afforded in similar historical cases. Most of the Warren Commission files on President Kennedy's assassination had long been available to the public at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Federal Bureau of Investigation documents on the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (60,000 pages) had long been publicly accessible.

Scholars and citizens, acting individually, had petitioned various agencies for disclosure, without success. They could not get access to the files on the assassination of Robert

## Getting FBI files for free

While the release of files by the two Los Angeles agencies was accomplished without recourse to the California Public Records Act, release of FBI files could not be initiated by requests from citizens and institutions except as specified by the federal Freedom of Information Act of 1966.

Technically, requests under this law must be made by individuals not institutions. The law's imperfect, often complicated process for pursuing disclosure, however, is far from manifest or automatic, and at one crucial stage the success of the requester is very much influenced by institutional support and affiliation.

The request, made by political scientist Greg Stone and myself, produced the discovery of approximately 32,000 pages of previously unreleased documents (3000 had been released to another requester in 1976). The costs charged by federal agencies for searching out and duplicating such files are often beyond the means of individual requesters. In this case, it could have cost \$7000 to \$10,000. Even a federal depository library such as ours receives no dispensation from these fees.

The federal law provided that if the requester can demonstrate that the release would benefit the public rather than the requester only, then the agency should waive the fees. The fee policy has changed over the decades. Initially, simply demonstrating that the research results were intended for publication and were likely to be published in a scholarly or public forum was often considered *prima facie* demonstration of public interest or public benefit sufficient to grant a fee waiver. Under stricter guidelines applied during the Reagan administration, this was no longer enough. A more substantive case needed to be made with a much greater burden of proof on the requester. The waiver was far from automatic.

In the case of the FBI's RFK files, the request for a fee waiver made by scholars acting on behalf of a formally established archive was a strong one. Yet the bureau did not reach a decision on the waiver request for three months. It finally reached a decision, and a positive one, only after we had sought the assistance of Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), who wrote the bureau re-

questing that the decision be delayed no further and that the waiver be granted. Had the case for public interest not been bolstered by the presence of a publicly accessible archive, the bureau's decision would clearly have been either negative or extensively delayed.

In all such cases the requester's only recourse lies in the courts, a po-

tential remedy that is both costly and can further delay the disclosure of documents for many months.

## Four years to disclosure

In a little more than four years (1984-1988), the official files on the Robert F. Kennedy assassination went from 95 percent withheld to 95 percent disclosed. The catalyst for this reversal was the institutional intervention of a public university library. Despite state and federal laws governing disclosure, political and administrative dynamics regarding the speed, cost, and fullness of disclosure are very much influenced by the historical and public interest legitimacy created by an archival-affiliated request.

When the collection needs of library archives, the research interests of scholars, and/or the public disclosure interests of concerned citizens or groups meet, the potential for success in gaining disclosure of official files can be increased. The institutionally affiliated request is very likely to reduce agency resistance and increase the likelihood that an agency will devote scarce resources to the disclosure process. The institution's intervention greatly increases the support for the release of files by providing a more substantial peg for the endorsements of politicians, organizations, journalists, and scholars who would be less inclined to endorse the requests of particular researchers.

## An alliance for access

This potential alliance between collecting institutions and individual scholars or requesters is surely not confined to the study of political violence. In many areas of public policy and historical research (atomic testing, environmental policy, the personal papers of political figures), there is likely to be an overlap between the files individual researchers are pursuing from government agencies and data that would provide a useful addition to a relevant library or archive.

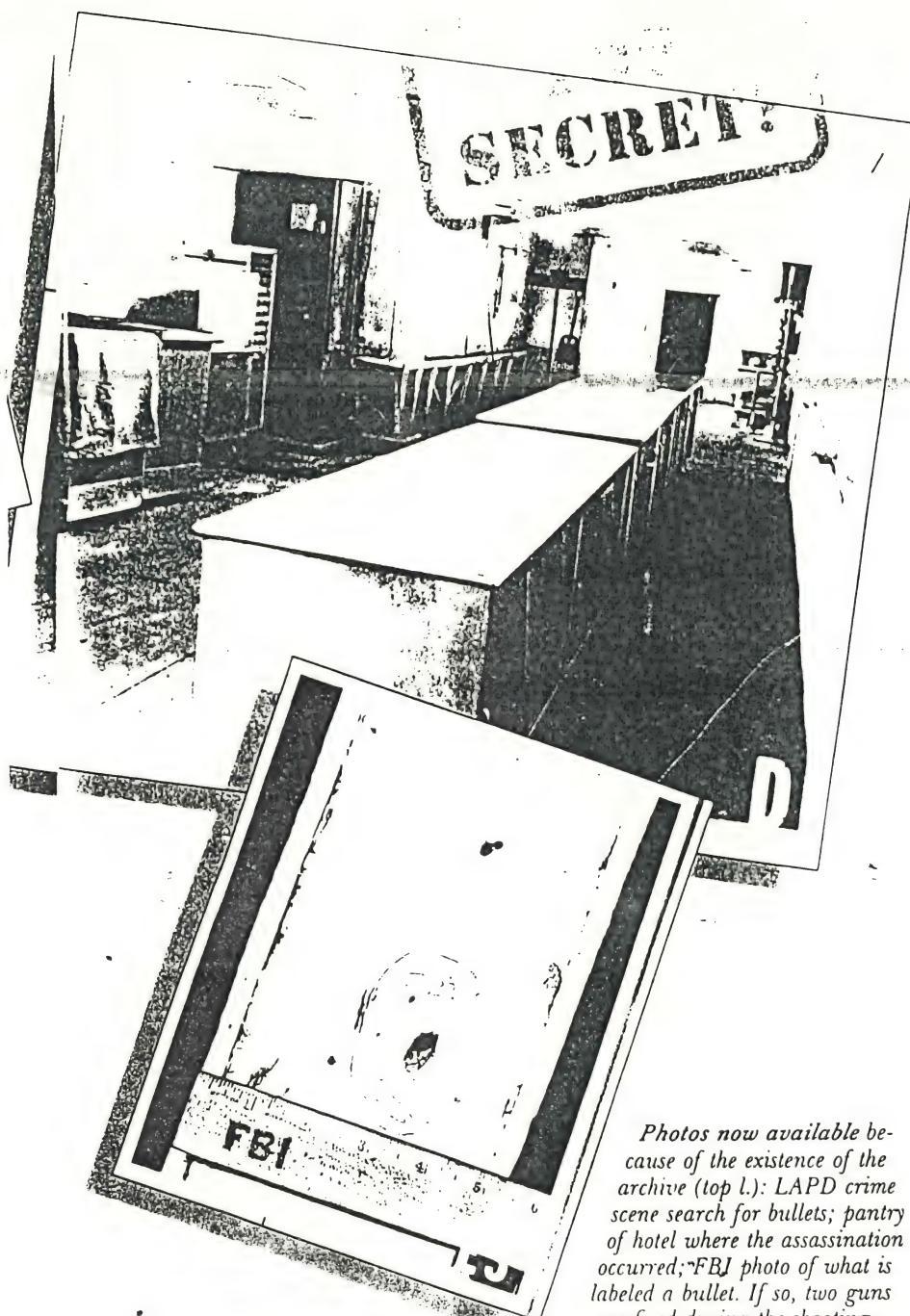
Resulting political and fiscal economies could be of significant help in increasing the flow of information in an era of more restrictive governmental policies concerning cost and dissemination. The experience of Southeastern Massachusetts University certainly provides hope for this possibility.

## Disclosure in Action

THE PRESENCE of the Robert F. Kennedy Assassination Archives at the Southeastern Massachusetts University Library has been the springboard for library exhibits, bibliographies, and programs on the freedom of information, including:

- a political scientist's view of the successes and failures of the federal Freedom of Information Act;
- the reflections on press access and responsibility from the editor of the major newspaper serving the region;
- a dinner meeting, tour of the archives, and lecture for area secondary school social science teachers, some of whom developed assignments encouraging their students to use the primary source materials in the archives;
- a presentation by Amnesty International's deputy director on the ways in which information on political repression is gathered and disseminated;
- a report by a professor of business on how databases can both inform and control; and
- discussions by librarians on censorship, the privatization of information, and the vital role libraries have in the struggle to keep information available.

Last year "freedom of information" was selected as the theme for the university's annual honors essay contest. The winner was the mother of three teenagers, who, after passing a high school equivalency test, enrolled in college and graduated third in her class with a double major in history and anthropology. She is now a graduate student at Simmons College School of Library and Information Sciences in Boston.—*Janet Freedman, Dean, Library Services, Southeastern Massachusetts University, North Dartmouth*



*Photos now available because of the existence of the archive (top l.): LAPD crime scene search for bullets; pantry of hotel where the assassination occurred; FBI photo of what is labeled a bullet. If so, two guns were fired during the shooting*

Kennedy at the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and District Attorney's Offices, or those at the FBI, of which only one-tenth had been released. Even a legal action initiated by CBS News and Paul Schrade, a shooting victim at Senator Kennedy's assassination, had failed to gain release of LAPD files in 1975.

Creating the Robert F. Kennedy Assassination Archive provided an institutional focus for those interest-

ed in pursuing disclosure. Clearly, in the perception of the media, the public, and even the government agencies themselves, the existence of an archive made the case for disclosure more compelling and historically important than did the requests by scholars writing books or reporters doing stories.

Since an institutional archive sought disclosure, the agencies were disabused of two of their most com-

mon responses to inquirers. The first is the common reply that agencies cannot "subsidize" books or articles by using scarce public resources to process files. The second stock response is that it is only a small coterie of conspiracy buffs, seeking to gather fodder for attacks on the official conclusions, who are interested in release of the materials.

The constituency for disclosure grew markedly with the establishment of the archive. Academics, newspaper editors, Hollywood luminaries, and pro-public disclosure groups were far more comfortable in providing solid endorsements to a request associated with a university library than one associated with the work of a particular researcher or even several scholars.

#### Resistance to disclosure

The process was still exceedingly slow. The LAPD, the primary investigative agency in this assassination, did not release its files until three years after the formal request from our archive. LAPD's staunch resistance to disclosure was overcome by political and media pressure. Two West Coast universities also expressed a desire to be the archival repository for the files.

The Los Angeles District Attorney's Office (LADA), convinced of the historical import of its own files, processed its materials for public release a year before LAPD files were released.

A special investigator for LADA, William R. Burnett, said that the fact that my request for release was on behalf of a public university made a positive difference in terms of the speed and enthusiasm for disclosure. The disclosure by the DA's office put further pressure on LAPD to disclose its files. When LAPD finally agreed to release the files, it gave custody to a mayor-appointed committee that selected the California State Archives as the official repository charged with processing the material.

In April 1988, the California State Archives in Sacramento released the vast majority of files and continues to process the rest. The documents were put on microfilm and were made available to any individual or institution that would purchase them.

## Ring Lardner jun tells MIKE DALY about his years as a Hollywood writer blacklisted in the communist witch-hunts of the '40s.

**I**N LATE 1947 the United States Government's House Un-American Activities Committee subpoenaed 10 film producers, directors and writers accused of being communist sympathisers.

One of the Hollywood 10 was Ring Lardner jun — son of the celebrated humorist — who had written for such films as *A Star is Born* and won an Oscar for the comedy *Woman of the Year*.

Ring Lardner jun joined the Communist Party in 1937, when he was 22. However, he and his nine colleagues refused to reveal their political affiliations. The dialogue between the committee and Lardner could have come out of one of his cynical screenplays. For example:

Committee: Are you now or have you been a member of the Communist Party? Lardner: I could answer, but if I did, I would hate myself in the morning.

The Hollywood 10 were eventually tried and convicted: a \$1,000 fine and a year's jail each. But, as Lardner discovered to his cost, the sentence was much, much longer. He and his colleagues, along with more than 300 others, were blacklisted by the US film industry.

In Lardner's case, this meant years of enforced anonymity and having to write under pseudonyms. It was not until 1965 that his own name appeared in a film credit, for *The Cincinnati Kid*, followed in 1969 by *M\*A\*S\*H* and his second Oscar.

Lardner, now 75, is in Australia as a guest of the fourth National Screenwriters' Conference, held at Lorne, Victoria, at the weekend and is addressing an Australian Film Institute seminar in Sydney tonight.

The bitterness he once harboured over his treatment has faded, "although at the time it had a considerable influence on my life and attitudes", he said.

"Now I regard it as a historical episode I got involved in. Some friendships were affected but we also had a very good feeling of solidarity among us, with family-to-family support."

He served 9½ months at the Federal Correctional Institute in Danbury, Connecticut. Forty years later he still couldn't repress a grin at the thought that the chairman of the committee who denounced him was already serving

time at Danbury by the time he began his own sentence.

"J. Parnell Thomas was the man who asked me the questions at the House committee hearings. He told me: 'Mr Lardner, any good American would answer the question'."

Thomas subsequently received a three-year sentence for stealing government money.

In prison Lardner began a novel, *The Ecstasy Of Owen Muri*, which was published in Britain in 1955 after unsuccessful attempts to secure an American publisher.

"I wrote it out of a desire to get something done in my own name," he said.

When the publisher, Jonathan Cape, accepted the book, Lardner felt obliged to inform him of his US status. Cape said: "We are aware of that curious incident. It may be of some publicity value."

Lardner laughed drily. "Only after the book came out in England was I able to get it published by a left-wing American publisher."

It is disquieting to discover that swashbuckling, terribly British TV shows like *The Adventures of Robin Hood* and *The Buccaneers* in the late '50s (even Prince Charles was a fan) were devised and scripted in New York by victims of the McCarthy era.

Ring Lardner, using the name Oliver Skene, wrote several British TV series with a blacklisted colleague, Ian McLellan Hunter.

"We couldn't go to England and work," he said. "From 1950 to '58, the US State Department had a policy of not issuing passports to anybody whose travel abroad would not be in the best interest of the United States".

"I found that writing novels was not going to support five children. The cheques had to come in under false names."

During those anonymous years, he also scripted minor US and British movies, including *A Breath Of Scandal* and *Virgin Island*.

"Other than reducing my income considerably for a number of years, the blacklist didn't have any lasting effects," he said.

"By the end of the '50s, things started to relax. I was able to get a certain amount of work in movies anonymously. From 1947 to 1965 I did not get a credit, although in '62 I was hired publicly by Otto Preminger."

Lardner grew up in an enviable writing environment: his father's friends included F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis and Dorothy Parker. His first job was with the New York *Daily Mirror*, until David Selznick lured him to Hollywood.

"The basic question of whether a screenwriter has any control over his

material has not changed much since the '30s," he said.

"What has gone is the studio system. It was more like a factory system with successions of writers working on the same material."

In 1941, MGM softened Lardner and co-writer Michael Kanin's original ending to the *Woman of the Year*, reshooting a new version which showed Katharine Hepburn's liberated character in a more deferential role.

Lardner wrote a book about his family in 1976 and another novel, *All For Love*, in 1985.

He quit screenwriting for 10 years and has just started again, working on two film scripts he and Ingo Preminger — brother of Otto and the producer of *M\*A\*S\*H* — hope to co-produce.

The first is based on a novel about the trucking industry, *King of the Road*, the second is the factual story of two innocent men who spent eight years on death row and came within 16 hours of being electrocuted for a murder in Florida.

In the case of the Hollywood 10, the US Supreme Court would not review the convictions, although the film industry has awarded Oscars to blacklisted writers like Lardner, Dalton Trumbo, Waldo Salt and the late Carl Foreman.

With hindsight, would Lardner have acted any differently?

"I don't think so. Your life evolves certain way and I've had as many good results as bad ones. I did write a novel I liked, which I might not have done otherwise."

Has he considered basing a film on his experiences?

"I have, but I'm more inclined to write it first as fiction: a novel."

Lardner deplores not only the films evolve to a formula today but their emphasis on violence. "I am longer interested in seeing any kind of shootout or chase: there are variations left."

All that was left, he agreed, was an exercise in marketing, rather than creativity. This brought him, chucked to a New York advertisement he seen for *Defending Your Life*, a comedy starring Meryl Streep, who directed and co-starred Albert Brooks. "The slogan is: 'The first true story of what happens after death'."

**Knott's Berry Farm**

Monday, March 25, 1991

# Niles want books banned

THE award-winning Australian book Oscar and Lucinda and Paul Theroux's Mosquito Coast should be replaced by more Christian novels on NSW high schools' English list, according to the latest addition to the State's literature reference group, the Festival of Light.

The issue was raised yesterday when it became known that Mrs Elaine Nile, a member of the NSW Upper House and a crusader against blasphemy, pornography and violence, would be nominated as the Festival of Light representative on the revamped reference group.

The announcement provoked an immediate response from the NSW Teachers Federation and the Australian Society of Authors, which said there was a bias away from experienced educators making important decisions on the composition of the NSW HSC English syllabus.

Mrs Nile's appointment was made after the State Government approached her husband, the Reverend Fred Nile, also a member of the Upper House, to make an appointment to the group.

Mr Nile, who said his wife had read the "controversial" books, admitted that the Festival of Light had a subjective view on the matter of what constituted good literature.

"We're not saying as the Festival of Light that books should be burnt, but a lot of care should be taken in the texts students are forced to study," Mr Nile said.

"Our argument is that if there is a better book that doesn't have anti-Christian propaganda then it should be on the list (syllabus)."

## Non-Christian messages

The Festival of Light is concerned that a scene in Peter Carey's Oscar and Lucinda, where a church minister hangs himself above his pulpit, represents a negative view of Christianity.

The novel, which won the prestigious British Booker Prize in 1988 and the 1989 Miles Franklin Award, is marked for study in NSW for 17 to 18-year-olds.

The Mosquito Coast also

contained a non-Christian message and it should be replaced by a more uplifting book of similar literary merit, Mr Nile said.

Mr Nile holds the balance of power in the NSW Upper House but he denied that there was any conflict of interest between the political role he and his wife would play as members of the Call to Australia Party and Mrs Nile's role on the reference group.

The deputy president of the NSW Teachers Federation, Mr Ray Cavenagh, said that although the Festival of Light had a legitimate interest in the debate, it did not represent the views of all the community.

The executive officer of the Australian Society of Authors, Ms Gail Cork, said the society was worried about the composition of the reference group and was opposed to its formation.

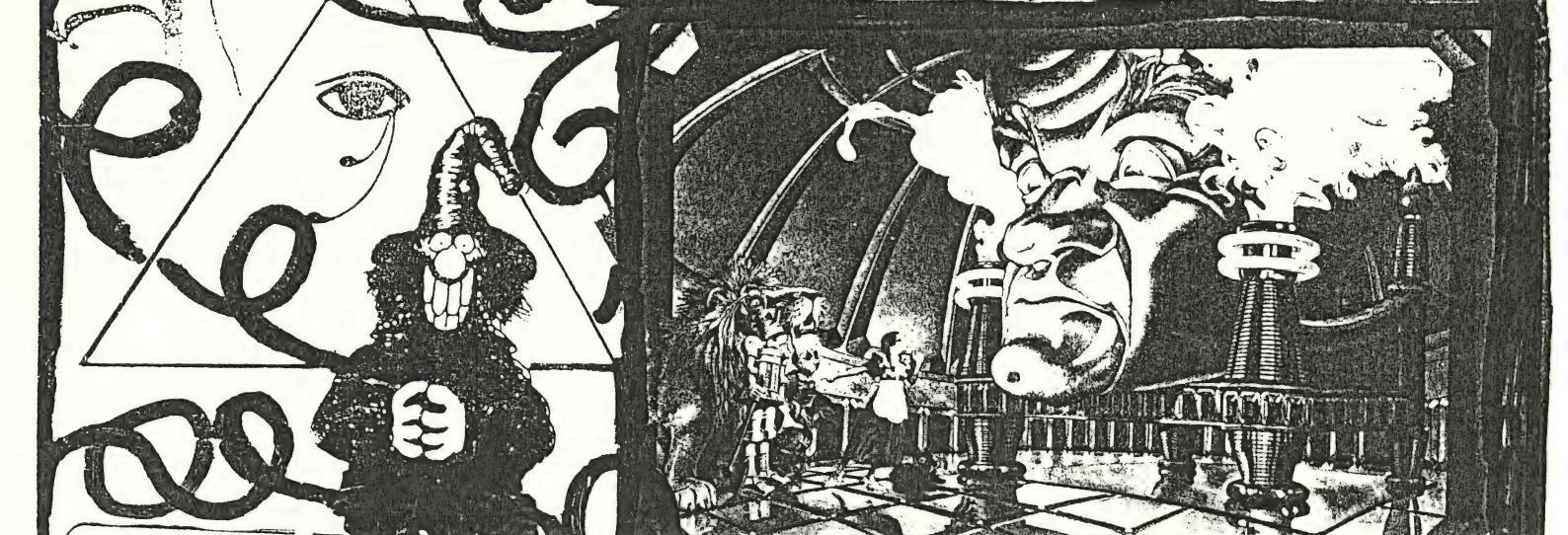
The group is set up to provide the Board of Studies with advice on any controversial or offensive aspects of English texts for School Certificate or HSC study.

- NICK RICHARDSON





MAKE YOUR POTENTIAL  
A reality



AND THE POWER FASCINATED HIM, BINDING HIM  
WITH SPELL-STRANDS OF DESIRE...

HE BEGAN TO EXPERIMENT...



## 'Censored Fashion'

Chinese authorities have banned the sale of T-shirts with discontented messages which until now have been the fashion hit of the season in Beijing. Messages like "Don't bother me, I'm fed up," or "I'm a dropout" have been banned because the Chinese authorities feel they give tourists the wrong message about life behind the bamboo curtain.

The T-shirts, which were mainly printed by small, private businessmen and sold at street stalls, first appeared in Beijing in early June, around the time of the second anniversary of the crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators.

None carried overtly political messages, but all expressed boredom or discontent, conflicting with the official image of China's happy masses working together to maintain a socialist state.

— HONOR PITT-KETHLEY

## Censorship

The BBC does not like certain words. Dildoes and buggery are always out. "Cocks are OK, as long as they aren't sucked"—a young researcher telephoned me back.

Latin's polite. *Vagina* just meant *sheath*. What doctors use, of course, must be alright. (But *penis* was a *penis*—nothing else. The Romans like to call a prick a prick.)

The BBC's *De-ffer* bleeps things out or else suggests a synonym instead. A poet I know was told he should use *screw*—his line—"There's fuck-all fucking in the grave."

I got away with using bugger once. I tried to be demure at first and said it rhymed with Rum Tum Tugger, but the host coerced me to recite it at the end.

In Wales, I said a simple "prick" and "piss"—the show's producer had okayed both words—

But when the bosses' switchboard jammed with calls, her earphone buzzed "For God's sake, get her off!"

These days, when on the air, I just conform and skirt around like the professionals, so audiences can play a crossword game—"Four letters, sounds like duck, begins with F."

## Sacked nudity buff hunts for raw material

AN American professor, sacked because he allegedly neglected his work to spend time researching nude beaches, is heading to Australia's nude shores while lawyers handle an appeal against his dismissal.

Professor George Harker, a senior professor at the Western Illinois University, was sacked after a unanimous vote by the Board of Governors of State Colleges and Universities to revoke his contract.

University officials spent three years gathering evidence against Dr Harker, who has published pamphlets on how to run nude beaches and appeared as an expert in cases dealing with the nude lifestyle.

The board claims Dr Harker missed classes and faculty meetings and did not call exams if they clashed with his work on nude beaches. Students also complained he only read parts of their papers before giving them a grade.

Dr Harker claims he has been sacked out of jealousy of his trips to the beaches.

It is the second time the board has sacked a professor in the 92-year history of the university. The first was in 1988 when a professor was sent to prison.

Dr Harker, who had conducted courses in the theory and philosophy of leisure at WIU since 1970, said he would soon leave for Australia for a vacation on its nude beaches and would leave his sacking in the hands of his lawyers.

The bearded, balding Dr Harker was not allowed to speak at the hearing that led to his sacking.

He said later "incompetent, naive and malicious" administrators were out to get him because they were envious of his field trips to the sun-baked beaches of Hawaii and Florida.

"The situation at Western today is the result of a combination of things which include envy," he said.

WIU president Ralph Wagoner said there was enough evidence to sack Dr Harker on 11 grounds of misconduct.

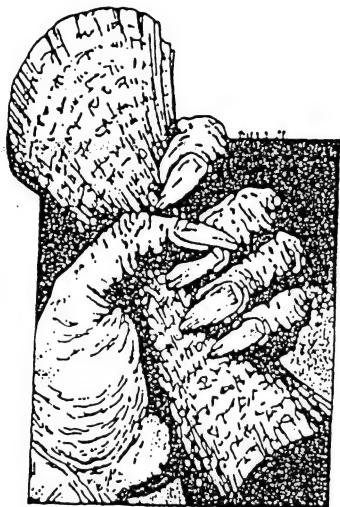
He said when the 11 charges are considered together, there was a "case for seeking the termination of Dr Harker".

— MICHELANGELO RUCC

THE AUSTRALIAN

37.91

# CENSORSHIP



## Now there's **GAUNTLET**, a new magazine making waves.

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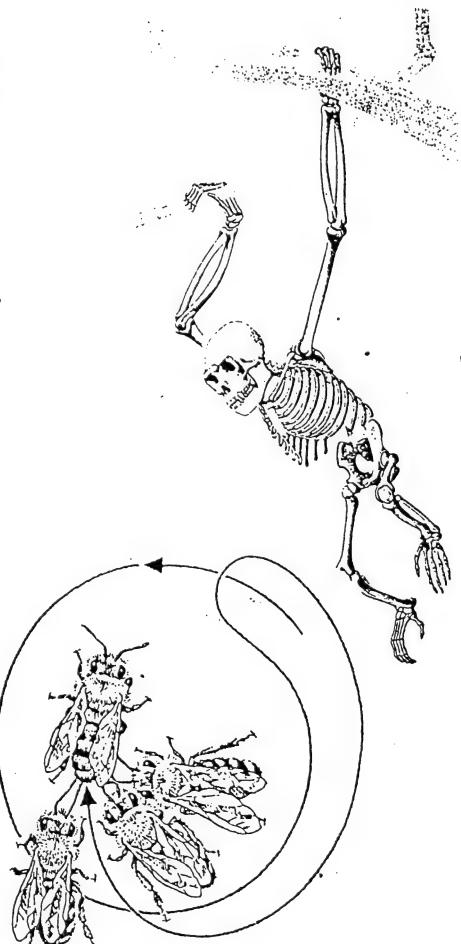
### GAUNTLET #1

Subtitled "Exploring the Limits of Free Expression," **Gauntlet** is an annual magazine focusing on the controversial topic of censorship. The premiere issue (full size, 112 pages) is a masterpiece--brilliantly designed, produced, and edited. The content includes articles and essays on various aspects of censorship, controversial fiction and commentary (EXAMPLE: Bill Relling's "The Last Temptation of Popeye"), interviews, book and movie reviews, and lots more. A few of the articles are reprinted, but the majority of the material is original and all of it is thought-provoking.

Here's a peek at some of the contributors: Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov, Ramsey Campbell, Harlan Ellison, Rex Miller, Dan Simmons, Gary Brandner, Doug Winter, Bill Nolan, Bill Relling, Ray Garton, Steve Rasnic Tem, Bill Munster, Steve Bissette, Henry Slesar, George Carlin, Andres Serrano...and plenty of others!

**Gauntlet** is a must buy! I predict this magazine will become one of the most sought after publications on the newsstand--pick up a copy right now!

• • • (\$8.95, Dept. MSR, 309 Powell Rd, Springfield, PA 19064.)





## Censorship register

The Australian Society of Authors is to establish a national book censorship register to monitor increasing incidents of book censorship by some school and municipal librarians. In a circular to all members, the ASA admits that while reports of censorship 'are usually anecdotal or hearsay', it nevertheless feels the confirmed reports justify its national register stance. Any bookseller, publisher, librarian or individual with examples of actual or attempted censorship of books is asked to contact the ASA.

22 THE SUN-HERALD, July 1, 1990

The shocking breach of human rights has come to light in two recent investigations. Telecom, during a three-month period, used hidden cameras and tape recorders to spy on international phone operators. As a result, one innocent young Sydney mother, who pleaded not guilty, was committed for jury trial this month after she was subjected to the heavy expense of a one-week committal hearing.

The charges involved the cost of a few overseas phone calls. The woman had a complete defence. Two weeks ago the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions dropped the pathetic case. Now it appears the Urban Transit Authority has been guilty of the same gross impropriety, with the revelation that, during a period of six months in a clandestine operation at Circular Quay Terry terminal, cameras have been secreted without the knowledge of staff in ticket booths.

Frightened employees have been told that there are more than 100 films intrusively recording their daily activities. Ticket sellers obtain privacy by drawing blinds when their booths are not operating.

One young female is distressed because she made a practice of undressing and changing from her athletic clothes into work clothes.

STATE and Federal government authorities have been secretly using hidden cameras to film and monitor public servants in the course of their work.

The power to prosecute those who breach our civil liberties it obviously has little future. It's not hard to understand that in cases where the Government is at fault that it would have little enthusiasm to empower a body to prosecute itself.

A straw poll of lawyers, human rights advocates and employees groups last week expressed a general abhorrence of the behaviour.

Labour Council secretary Michael Easson said of the covert filming of UTA workers, "This is a gross invasion of privacy, the secret cloak and dagger approach to monitoring is just madness. It is an outrageous violation of their civil liberties and someone at the State Transit Authority has gone off his nut."

John Garrett, secretary of the Firemen and Deckhands Union, strongly criticised the sinister filming as an invasion of privacy and complained that the employees know that it's happening and accept it".

Even in this circumstance - where the cameras are usually obvious - the Privacy Committee demands that customers and employees 'must be made

aware that they are being monitored and signs should say so'.

The very necessary Privacy Committee is a lame duck when it comes to protecting citizens. It has excellent

**MICHAEL EASSON**

Another was concerned over a private personal contact with her boyfriend. The only acceptable use of cameras is that "if surveillance is to be undertaken, the parties must be aware that it is happening" says Dr Jacqueline Morgan of the NSW Privacy Committee.

She used the example of bank video cameras, where surveillance is conducted because it "relates to security of the job and not work practices and the employees know that it's happening and accept it".

Even in this circumstance - where the cameras are usually obvious - the Privacy Committee demands that customers and employees 'must be made

aware that they are being monitored and signs should say so'.

The very necessary Privacy Committee is a lame duck when it comes to protecting citizens. It has excellent

**Big Brother**

staff but its powers are limited to the naming in Parliament of those who breach the right to privacy. With royal commission powers it has the requisite machinery to investigate but unless the State Government gives it the power to prosecute those who breach our civil liberties it obviously has little future. It's not hard to understand that in cases where the Government is at fault that it would have little enthusiasm to empower a body to prosecute itself.

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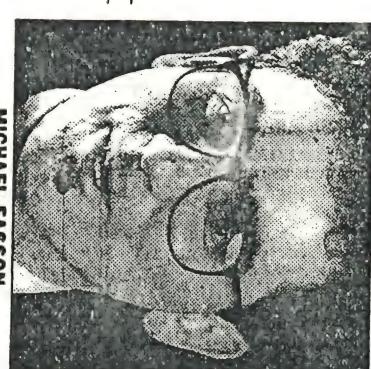
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The very necessary Privacy Committee is a lame duck when it comes to protecting citizens. It has excellent



ering technique. "There would be an outcry if employees were aware of the extent of this surveillance. It breaches every ethic in the book and protection is needed to get the necessary degree of respect for employees."

I endorse the sentiments of famed America jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes: "We have to choose, and for my part I think in a less evil that some criminals should escape than that the Government should play an ignoble part." If there is past misbehaviour, normal investigation methods should be employed and if evidence is available charges laid. If there is fear of future misbehaviour the work system should be altered so that it cannot occur.

In these two investigations exposed cameras would have prevented any further wrongdoing. But instead the Government used secret cameras, in the hope that wrongs would occur.

It is shameful to spend millions of dollars in a system that is not working in the hope that people will be caught in the future. Prevention would have been better than cure.

These snooping, Peeping Tom preconditions unsettle life for those who work for the Government in the service of the community. No-one should be subjected to the disturbing atmosphere of paranoia that Big Brother spying inflicts.

Human dignity is at stake. The right to be left alone is basic, and we are crossing the fine line between easy going and weak if we don't stop this government excess. Or is this just the start?

## BANNED BOOKS

Banned Books Week 1991 reaffirms the ideals embodied in the U.S. Bill of Rights. This tenth annual week-long observance also commemorates the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights, those first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution that secure and protect those rights critical to thought, expression, and life in the United States. The First Amendment, of course, secures for every person the right to think, speak, write, and read whatever he or she wishes.

That right, however, is constantly challenged or ignored by individuals and groups who would proscribe what each of us may read and write. Books especially are targeted.

The following list provides a sampling of adult and children's books that have been banned, challenged, or restricted in the United States, as reported in the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* from May 1990 through May 1991. They are selected from the *Banned Books Week '91 Resource Book* prepared by the American Library Association and available from the ALA and the American Booksellers Association.

The Resource Book contains an annotated list of books banned or challenged from 387 B.C. to the present; an annotated list of books banned, restricted, or challenged during 1990 and 1991; an article on the Bill of Rights and its absolute importance to us all; a collection of notable First Amendment court cases; display ideas and sample news releases; and ready-to-use art for ads and bookmarks.

A single act of restricting a single book not only imperils freedom of expression. It is also a direct affront to

## The First Amendment

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*

democratic government; it undermines Thomas Jefferson's still-relevant requirement of an informed public. The accumulation of individual attempts—by local groups, state courts, or national institutions—to restrict or prohibit access to a book puts us all at risk. And Banned Books Week counters that risk.

The tenth annual Banned Books Week is sponsored by the American Booksellers Association, the American Library Association, the American Society of Journalists and Authors, the Association of American Publishers, and the National Association of College Stores. The Library of Congress's Center for the Book adds its endorsement, as does Baker & Taylor Books.

**REMEMBER!** "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech or of the press . . ."

**REMEMBER!** These books work. They work to open minds, to challenge thought, to inspire action, to free the imagination and fire the spirit.

### Adult

— **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.** Twain, Mark. Bantam Bks. ISBN 0-553-21128-5. Paper \$1.95.  
— Pocket Bks. ISBN 0-671-70137-1. Paper \$3.95.

— **Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.** Twain, Mark. Putnam. ISBN 0-448-11000-

- 8. Paper \$7.95.  
— Collier Bks (Macmillan). ISBN 0-020-45550-X. Paper \$1.95.  
— New Amer Lib. ISBN 0-451-52373-3.
- 3. Paper \$1.95.  
— Pocket Bks. ISBN 0-671-70136-3. Paper \$3.95.  
— Bantam Bks. ISBN 0-553-21079-3. Paper \$2.25.
- **Christine.** King, Stephen. New Amer Lib. ISBN 0-451-16044-4. Paper \$5.95.
- **The Color Purple.** Walker, Alice. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. ISBN 0-15-119153-0. Cloth \$14.95.  
— Pocket Bks. ISBN 0-671-66878-1. Paper \$7.95.  
— Pocket Bks. ISBN 0-671-72779-6. Paper \$5.95.
- **Exposing the AIDS Scandal.** Cameron, Paul. Huntington House, Inc. ISBN 0-910311-52-8. Paper \$7.95.
- **Grendel.** Gardner, John Champlin. Knopf (Random House). ISBN 0-394-47143-1. Cloth \$15.95.  
— Vintage Bks (Random House). ISBN 0-679-72311-0. Paper \$7.95.
- **Handmaid's Tale.** Atwood, Margaret Eleanor. Fawcett Bks. ISBN 0-449-21260-2. Paper \$5.95.
- **I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.** Angelou, Maya. Random House. ISBN 0-394-42986-9. Cloth \$19.95.  
— Bantam Bks. ISBN 0-553-27937-8. Paper \$4.95.
- **Juggling.** Berkley Pub Group. ISBN 0-425-11128-8. Paper \$2.50.
- **Lesbian Couples.** Clunis, D. Merilee. Seal Pr (Consortium Bks). ISBN 0-931188-85-7. Cloth \$9.95.
- **The Male Couple's Guide to Living Together: What Gay Men Should Know About Living With Each Other and Coping in a Straight World.** Marcus, Eric. HarperCollins. ISBN 0-06-096143-0. Paper \$10.95.

# Focus

— **Mission Earth 3: The Enemy Within.** Hubbard Ron L. Bridge Pubns. ISBN 0-318-37681-4. Paper \$4.95.

— **My Sweet Audrina.** Andrews, V. C. Pocket Bks. ISBN 0-671-72946-2. Paper \$5.95.

— **My House of Poems.** Giovanni, Nikki. Morrow. ISBN 0-688-05021-2. Paper \$7.95.

— **Of Mice and Men.** Steinbeck, John. Random House. ISBN 0-394-60472-5. Cloth \$11.95.

— **Viking.** ISBN 0-670-52071-3. Cloth \$15.95.

— **Bantam Bks.** ISBN 0-553-27824-X. Paper \$3.50.

— **One Hundred Years of Solitude.** Garcia Marquez, Gabriel. HarperCollins. ISBN 0-06-011418-5. Cloth \$28.00.

— **Avon.** ISBN 0-380-01503-X. Paper \$5.95.

— **The Shining.** King, Stephen. Doubleday. ISBN 0-385-12167-9. Cloth \$21.95.

— **New Amer Lib.** ISBN 0-451-16091-6. Paper \$5.95.

## Children

— **Abel's Island.** Steig, William. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. ISBN 0-374-40016-4. Paper \$3.95.

— **Farrar, Straus & Giroux.** ISBN 0-374-30010-0. Cloth \$12.95.

— **Angel Face.** Klein, Norma. Penguin Bks (Viking). ISBN 0-670-12517-2. Cloth \$13.95.

— **Fawcett Juniper.** ISBN 0-449-70282-0. Paper \$3.50.

— **Boys and Sex.** Pomeroy, Wardell B. Delacorte Pr (Doubleday). ISBN 0-385-30250-9. Cloth \$15.95.

— **Dell Pub Co.** ISBN 0-440-20811-4. Paper \$3.95.

— **Bridge to Terabithia.** Paterson, Katherine. T. Y. Crowell (HarperCollins). ISBN 0-690-01359-0. Cloth \$13.95.

— **HarperCollins.** ISBN 0-06-440184-7. Paper \$3.95.

— **(Large Print).** Isis Large Print Bks. ISBN 1-55736-010-3. Cloth \$14.95.

— **The Chocolate War.** Cormier, Robert. Pantheon Bks (Random House). ISBN 0-394-82805-4. Cloth \$20.00.

— **Dell Pub Co.** ISBN 0-440-94459-7. Paper \$3.50.

— **(Large Print).** G. K. Hall (Macmillan). ISBN 0-8161-4528-8. Cloth \$14.95.

— **(4 Cassettes).** Frank Mueller. Listening Library. ISBN 0-8072-7221-3. \$29.95.

— **The Day They Came to Arrest the Book.** Hentoff, Nat. Dell Pub Co.

ISBN 0-440-91814-6. Paper \$3.25.

— **A Day No Pigs Would Die.** Peck, Robert Newton. Knopf (Random House). ISBN 0-394-48235-2. Cloth \$19.00.

— **Dell Pub Co/Laurel Leaf.** ISBN 0-440-92083-3. Paper \$3.50.

— **(3 Cassettes).** Listening Library. ISBN 0-8072-8529-3. \$25.95.

— **(Large Print).** (1 Book & Cassette). Listening Library. ISBN 0-8072-8507-2. Cloth \$35.95.

— **Fade.** Cormier, Robert. Delacorte Pr (Doubleday). ISBN 0-440-50057-5. Cloth \$15.95.

— **Dell Pub Co.** ISBN 0-440-20487-9. Paper \$4.95.

— **Fallen Angels.** Myers, Walter Dean. Scholastic Bks. ISBN 0-590-40942-5. Cloth \$12.95.

— **Scholastic Bks.** ISBN 0-590-40943-3. Paper \$3.50.

— **Families: A Celebration of Diversity, Commitment, and Love.** Jenness, Aylette. Houghton Mifflin. ISBN 0-395-47038-2. Cloth \$13.95.

— **Girls and Sex.** Pomeroy, Wardell B. Delacorte (Doubleday). ISBN 0-385-30251-7. Cloth \$15.95.

— **Dell Pub Co/Laurel Leaf.** ISBN 0-440-20812-2. Paper \$3.95.

— **The Kid's Book of Questions.** Stock, Gregory. Workman Pub Co. ISBN 0-89480-631-9. Paper \$4.95.

— **My Friend Flicka.** O'Hara Mary. Lippincott (HarperCollins). ISBN 0-397-00981-X. Cloth \$15.95.

— **HarperCollins.** ISBN 0-06-080902-7. Paper \$3.95.

— **(Large Print).** C. E. Tunnicliffe. Isis Large Print Bks. ISBN 1-85089-901-0. Cloth \$12.95.

— **The New Teenage Body Book.** McCoy, Kathy. Putnam. ISBN 0-89586-621-8. Cloth \$19.95.

— **Putnam.** ISBN 0-89586-619-6. Paper \$12.95.

— **No Place for Me.** Declements, Barthe. Penguin Bks (Viking). ISBN 0-670-81908-5. Cloth \$12.95.

— **Rhyme Stew.** Dahl, Roald. Quentin Blake. Viking Pr. ISBN 0-670-82916-1. Cloth \$14.95.

— **Scary Poems for Rotten Kids.** O'Huigin, Sean. Firefly Bks. ISBN 0-88753-177-6. Paper \$4.95.

— **Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark.** Schwartz, Alvin. Stephen Gammell. Lippincott (HarperCollins). ISBN 0-397-31926-6. Cloth \$13.95.

— **HarperCollins.** ISBN 0-06-440170-7. Paper \$3.50.

— (1 Cassette). Read by George Irving. Harper Audio. ISBN 0-89845-758-0. \$9.95.

— **Summer of My German Soldier.** Greene, Betty. Dial Pr (Dutton). ISBN 0-8037-8321-3. Cloth \$14.95.

— **Bantam Bks.** ISBN 0-553-27247-0. Paper \$3.50.

— **Then Again Maybe I Won't!** Blume, Judy. Dell Pub Co. ISBN 0-440-48659-9. Paper \$3.25.

— (3 Cassettes). Listening Library. ISBN 0-8072-7295-7. \$22.95.

— **Vasilissa the Beautiful: A Russian Fairy.** Winthrop, Elizabeth. HarperCollins. ISBN 0-06-024049-0. Cloth \$12.89.

— **HarperCollins.** ISBN 0-06-021662-X. Cloth \$15.95.

— **HarperCollins.** ISBN 0-597-32458-8. Library \$15.89.

— **HarperCollins.** ISBN 0-06-021663-8. Library \$15.89.

— **Where the Sidewalk Ends. (1 Cassette).** Shel Silverstein. HarperCollins. ISBN 0-06-025667-2. Cloth \$14.95.

— **Harper Audio.** ISBN 0-694-00047-7. \$10.95.

— **HarperCollins.** ISBN 0-06-025668-0. Library \$14.89.

— **Witch Water.** Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. Atheneum (Macmillan). ISBN 0-689-30595-8. Cloth \$9.95.

— **Dell Pub Co/Yearling.** ISBN 0-440-40038-4. Paper \$3.25.

— **The Witch Herself.** Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. Atheneum (Macmillan). ISBN 0-689-30664-4. Cloth \$7.95.

— **Dell Pub Co/Yearling.** ISBN 0-440-40044-9. Paper \$2.95.

— **Witch's Sister.** Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. Atheneum (Macmillan). ISBN 0-689-30453-6. Cloth \$8.95.

— **Atheneum (Macmillan).** ISBN 0-689-70471-2. Paper \$1.95.

— **Dell Pub Co/Yearling.** ISBN 0-440-40028-7. Paper \$3.25.

— **The Witches.** Dahl, Roald. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. ISBN 0-374-38457-6. Cloth \$15.95.

— **Penguin Bks.** ISBN 0-14-034020-3. Paper \$3.95.

— **Witches' Children: A Story of Salem.** Clapp, Patricia. Penguin Bks. ISBN 0-14-032407-0. Paper \$3.95.

— **A Wrinkle in Time.** L'Engle, Madeleine. Farrar Straus & Giroux. ISBN 0-374-38614-5. Cloth \$50.00.

— **Dell Pub Co.** ISBN 0-440-99805-0. Paper \$3.50.

— **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been? Stories of Young America.** Oates, Joyce Carol. Fawcett Bks. ISBN 0-449-307595-6. Paper \$1.75.



Naked, pregnant and proud of it... actress Demi Moore pictured on the cover of a US magazine

By SANDRA LEE  
in New York

ACTRESS Demi Moore has challenged American taboos by appearing naked and heavily pregnant on a magazine cover.

The 28-year-old Brat Packer shed her clothes for photographer Annie Leibovitz in a provocative photo spread that clearly shows her pregnancy.

Moore, star of last year's hit movie *Ghost* and wife of actor Bruce Willis, is eight months pregnant with her second child.

In the series of photographs, Moore is snapped in various stages of undress which highlight her advanced stage of pregnancy.

She was not paid for the controversial nude shots, which are cer-

# The naked truth about star Demi

tain to stir conservative middle America.

The couple, who already have a three-year-old daughter, show no shyness when it comes to childbirth.

During the birth of daughter Rumer in 1988, three video-cameras recorded the event, which was witnessed by six people.

Her next baby is due late next month.

Vanity Fair editor Tina Brown said the photographs break the stereotype of celebrity glamor, which portrays the stars through Vaseline-coated lenses and wearing flowing, glittering gowns.

"The Demi Moore cover is a radical statement of new Hollywood values," Brown said.

"For too long women have felt pregnancy is

something they have to conceal and disguise.

"It takes the courage of a woman as modern and innovative as Demi Moore to cast aside the conventions of traditional beauty and declare there is nothing more glorious than the sight of a woman carrying a child."

Moore is no stranger to controversy.

At 22, shortly before starring in the quintessential Brat Packer movie *St Elmo's Fire*, she beat a drug and alcohol abuse problem and her first marriage ended in divorce.

She married Willis after a four-month romance and has since weathered suggestions that her career was boosted after tying the knot with the *Die Hard* star, who was formerly known as a hard-living party-goer.

## DE SADE THE NEXT VICTIM

The works of the Marquis de Sade are the latest victims of attempted censorship in Britain. The release by Arrow of a new paperback edition of *Juliette* has provoked calls in the London *Times* for Random Century to be prosecuted under the Obscene Publications Act and has prompted UK booksellers Dillons and Menzies to reconsider stocking the book.

Whitaker's *Bookseller* reports that Dillons has withdrawn the book while Menzies has advised its store managers to treat the book with caution and not to actively promote it.

Random Century has said that 'although de Sade's publications are controversial, they should properly be taken in their historical context'. The company says Arrow's 'presentation of the titles has been restrained ... the editions are scholarly with introductions by prominent academics placing de Sade's work in the history of ideas'.

WEEKLY Book NEWSLETTER 21.8.91

# Censored: sounds of flushing toilets

**LONDON, Friday:** Buckingham Palace has released secret archives revealing clashes between leading playwrights and the Lord Chamberlain, the head of the Queen's household who was "the nation's conscience" in the theatre for more than 230 years.

The recently released archives covers 1901 to 1968, when Parliament ended the censorship powers given to the Lord Chamberlain in 1737 by the Prime Minister, Robert Walpole, to counter political criticism by author Henry Fielding.

One critic wrote yesterday that the archives showed this century's Lords Chamberlain "retained a late-Victorian notion of what the theatre should be" and imposed "the values and beliefs of the philistine, blue-blooded section of the ruling class".

August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* was banned in the 1920s because the Lord Chamberlain, Lord Cromer, felt it "undermined" relations between master and servant.

During that period, successive Lords Chamberlain wanted to ban Somerset Maugham's *Our Betters* and Noel Coward's *The Vortex* because they gave a "wholly false impression" that the upper classes were "a frivolous and degenerate set of people".

Lord Cromer even tried to get the backing of King George V. However, the monarch said that while *The Vortex* was "disgusting" in showing cocaine-taking

and adultery among the upper-middle classes, the play "unfortunately can't be prohibited".

In 1957, Samuel Beckett's *End Game* was banned because of a reference to God: "The bastard, he doesn't exist."

In the same year, the Lord Chamberlain, Lord Scarbrough, ordered certain words in John Osborne's *The Entertainer* — including "ass-upwards", "pouf", "shagged", and "wet your pants" — to be altered. Words such as "rogered", "balls" and "had Sylvia" were ordered to be cut.

In 1968, just before the late Lord Chamberlain, Lord Cobbold, was stripped of his censor's powers, he ordered four four-letter words expunged from the rock musical *Hair*.

He then banned the production after one of his staff warned: "This is a demoralising play. It extols dirt, anti-establishment views, homosexuality, free love, and drug-taking, and it inveighs against patriotism."

In 1952, Lord Scarbrough even held up the licence for a production of Graham Greene's first play *The Living Room* because one scene involved flushing a toilet.

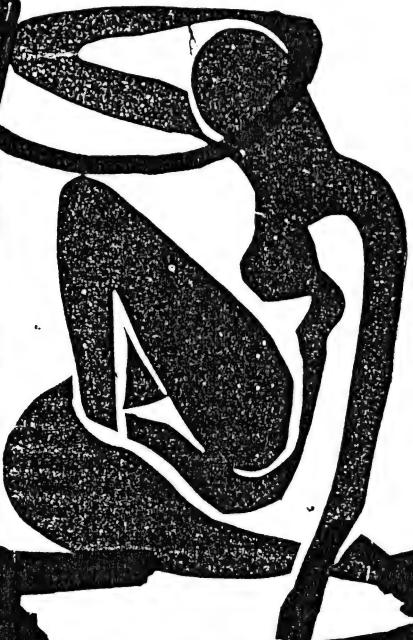
A letter from the Lord Chamberlain's office to the producer said: "The Lord Chamberlain objects, in principle, to the pulling of lavatory plugs and all that that stands for."

Australian Associated Press

WELL, we don't dig the censorship laws much; but at the moment they have to be adhered to — it's the law. Whether those laws are just or not is debatable, and debate he does, old JELLO BIAFRA. Inside his latest LP, *Last Scream of the Missing Neighbours* (Jello Biafra with D.O.A.), is a 16 page booklet bagging the cripes out of US censorship laws, the PMRC, and just about anything to do with the American constitution. In fact, the whole package would be uproariously funny if it wasn't so disturbing. Available via import on Alternative Tentacles records (and soon to be distributed nationally by Waterfront), this is a must-buy for Biafra fans and hard thinkers. Check out the fabulously titled *Full Metal Jackoff*.



# ART - WORK - RIOT





*Sue Williams...*

SUE WILLIAMS LOOKS AT LIFE

# The hellish menace behind Nile 'miracle'

**F**RED Nile calls it a miracle. A miracle that the delicate subject of abortion is back being kicked around as a political football on the parliamentary playing fields.

A miracle that a hard-won women's right has been put, once again, under ugly siege.

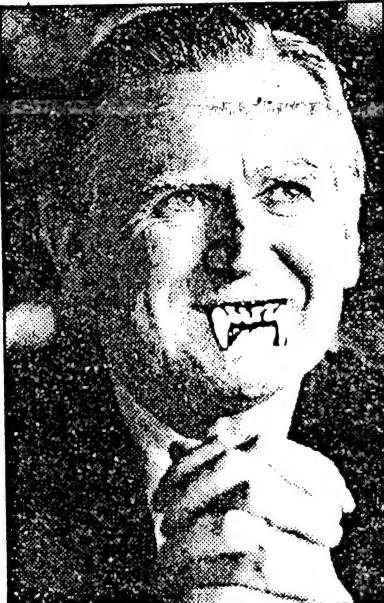
A miracle that has re-stoked the bitterness of the sinister debate over just who should be allowed to have control over women's bodies — themselves or a government.

Whichever way I look at it, I can't see it as a miracle. A menace, yes. An abomination, certainly. But "a remarkable event suffused with joy"? Never.

All the women I have ever known to have had abortions — and statistics say one in every two Australian women has been there — have done so as an absolutely last resort. I have never met a single woman who has not gone to hell and back over that decision.

People like Fred Nile argue that life is sacred from the vision of a host of sexually promiscuous, careless women nipping into a clinic for a neat termination as a convenient alternative method of contraception.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Step into any abortion clinic and you will find women from every



Nile — denial of women's rights  
age, every social strata, every kind of family situation.

There will often be weeping schoolgirls for whom a moment of sexual experimentation could turn into a life-long punishment in the form of gym-slip motherhood.

There will be young women forced to pay the excruciating price of failed contraception. There will be women with large families who can't possibly afford another mouth to feed.

The only thing they will often have in common is a shared desperation that, were abortion to suddenly become outlawed, would certainly drive them to search for a backstreet abortionist.

For how on earth can you force a woman to make her own body go through an experience she cannot bear the thought of, filled with self-loathing, anger and bitterness?

Women are always paying the price of their own fertility — how can a government even consider legislating to make them more rigidly held to ransom?

Fred Nile won the first round on Thursday of his battle to restrict abortion by pushing through a bill to get it debated.

A miracle? I think we're in dire need of one. And one that will transform abortion from an emotive issue dragged out into debate whenever it is politically expedient, to one that is enshrined and protected in law where those who believe they have a monopoly on morality can't touch it.



# Alaska Library Sued by Artists

Removal of nude photos from an exhibit brings charges of censorship

On July 1, Anne Olyphant, municipal librarian at the Z.J. Loussac Library, part of the Anchorage Municipal Libraries in Alaska, removed four photographs of nude subjects from an exhibit being displayed near the library's third-floor elevators. Olyphant was concerned that the photos, part of the University of Alaska Anchorage Camera Club's Sixth Annual Juried Art Show, could have a detrimental effect on children who may wander up from the second-floor youth section of the library.

"I have nothing against the photos personally," Olyphant told the *Anchorage Times*. "They're very artistic photos and very good photos. I'm not trying to censor or be selective in what gets shown. I'm not trying to impose what I like on anyone else."

The Alaska Civil Liberties

Union (ACLU) disagreed. After the local media reported on the removal, the ACLU issued a protest, saying that the removal "violated the library's mission to promote free exchange of ideas and information."

The Alaska Library Association expressed similar concern. "The library's rationale for removal was extremely unfortunate," said June Stevens, the state association's intellectual freedom chair. She doesn't like to see the library in the role of a censor, especially after hard battles against censorship, as in the cases of the obscenity charges leveled against the Cincinnati Museum for displaying the photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe. "And what's to say this sort of censorship couldn't be imposed onto the library's own adult collection next?" she asks.

## A controversy builds

At first, the two artists whose photos were removed were amenable to the library's offer to display the photos in a first-floor conference



The Alaska judge ordered only this shot (l) of Karen Roush's three nude photos back into the exhibit; Johnathon R. Green's photo (r) remained out



JOHNATHON R. GREEN

room. With subsequent media attention and after being approached by the ACLU, however, the artists decided to sue Olyphant and Connie Jones, the city cultural and recreational services director who oversees the library, asking for a restraining order on the removal of the photos.

The suit was filed on July 18, the scheduled last day of the exhibit; the library decided it would extend the exhibit until the judge's ruling since there was no new exhibit scheduled until the next month.

Superior Court Judge Joan Katz immediately asked for a written rationale from the library; she later ruled that one photo—of a nude man with his back to the camera—was acceptable to be displayed. The three other photos—two depicting frontal nudity and one of a man clutching his torn-out heart (really a pig's heart)—were deemed unacceptable.

The library then added the approved photo to its exhibit area until July 28.

## Unresolved issues for the field?

Stevens is not comfortable with the conclusion of the matter, however. "I wish the judge addressed the constitutional issues involved, instead of just reviewing the actual photographs," she says. She also wishes for better guidelines on how libraries can handle these situations and is looking forward to seeing the revised exhibit spaces and bulletin board policies that are part of the Library Bill of Rights revision being worked on at the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference just as the Anchorage events were unfolding.

At press time, the ACLU, still concerned about those three "unacceptable" photos, was considering pursuing the issue in court.

Whatever happens, this incident will surely become a case study for professional discussion among librarians, as is the suit brought by a homeless man protesting patron rules at the Morristown Public Library in New Jersey (see "Kreimer v. Morristown Fires Debate in Library Community," *LJ*, August, p. 15ff.). How fruitful this discussion may be remains to be seen. "Unfortunately," says Alaska Library Association President Gaylin Fuller, "it's the kind of case that pits librarians against one another." □

# McQueen

Against Salman Rushdie's right to live and to free expression Humphrey McQueen balances the consequences of this act of writing. One possible benefit from the Rushdie affair, he suggests, is the recognition that books do matter.

## The collision of imaginations

Jokes in indexes are a well-recognised means of relieving the tedium of slotting hundreds of entries into alphabetical order. V. Gordon Childe got in some of his unkindest cuts about the links between corruption and how Labour governs in this way.

On a grander scale of surprise are entire reference books which can be read for their entertainment value. Percy Scholes's *Oxford Companion to Music* has hilarious entries on applause and the can-can whose steps, he admitted, no member of the editorial staff could execute.

Fowler's *Modern English Usage* also has material to make you chuckle or hoot with every page. The column on 'Mahomet, Mahomedan, etc' is a perfect example of Fowler's good sense which finds no virtue in a pedantry that badgers the public away from Mahomet and towards 'Muhammad with a dot under the h'.

Yet it is a brave author who these days makes jokes, no matter how arcane, on the name of the prophet.

Notwithstanding this danger, western mass media continued to call Khomeini an Ayatollah long after he had become an Iman—which would be like calling Pope John Paul II your grace instead of your holiness. Since 'ayatollah' did not get into the 1974 update of the *Shorter OED*, sub-editors presumably decided that mass media audiences would not take kindly to abandoning 'ayatollah' after putting so much effort into learning its pronunciation and spelling. Moreover, what would happen to jokes like calling the new head of Coke the Aya-Cola?

A year has passed and Salman Rushdie is still alive after changing addresses sixty times and separating from his new wife. The chances of some true believer grasping at the best seat available in paradise by killing him will shadow Rushdie all the days of his life. Anything said or

written in his defence helps to keep that threat alive.

At the peak of the danger, comments that could have been construed as less than a complete defence of Rushdie's right to live and to free expression were out of court. While I supported that position I found myself out of sympathy with several writers who explained why they thought *Satanic Verses* should be published.

First there were the liberal Mohammedans who claimed that Khomeini's death threat denied Islam's tradition of intellectual tolerance. No doubt there are many individuals who are both followers of the prophet and culturally pluralistic. Mahomet was not one of them but rather combined the worst features of Christ, Paul and Constantine.

As Maxime Rodinson reports in his still indispensable biography (Penguin, 1971), Mahomet had three poets assassinated for poking fun at his semi-literate style and etiolated theology. Mahomet did what Plato only joked about. To pretend that the core of Islam is tolerance is as risible as claiming that the papacy has been the fount of scientific scepticism.

Second, there were the post-modernist critics who suddenly discovered that fictions were not mere narrative strategies. While sections of literary academia had been promoting themselves through self-referential discourses, the common reader, as well as those who either don't or can't read very much, continued in the benighted belief that books do matter very much.

For a long time, opponents of censorship have argued that no one ever got raped by a book, which is as convincing a statement against violent pornography as the National Rifle Association's claim that people, not guns, kill people. One possible benefit from the Rushdie affair has been the recognition that books do matter.

Thirdly, there were the intellectuals who could not comprehend that there were people anywhere in the world who still believed that ideas were worth killing and dying for. The Rushdie case has re-posed a terrible couplet of questions: if there is nothing worth dying for, can there be anything worth living for? And if something is worth dying for, is it also worth killing for? Most writers in the West could think of individuals for whom we would sacrifice our own lives and in whose defence we might kill, but we have become uncertain about living, dying and killing for a belief.

The secularisation of the West has made it harder for even fundamentalist Christians to argue that articulate non-believers should be put to the sword. Screening *The Last Temptation of Christ* showed not only how ignorant most Christians were of the doctrine of the Incarnation but also how limited was the defence that they were prepared to make against a perceived blasphemy.

From out of this secularist mentality came the assumption that whatever the emotional distress caused by Rushdie's words they could never be injurious in the way that a physical assault would be.

Here, two aspects of the imagination had collided.

Secularists had lost the ability to empathise with people for whom verbal attacks on their beliefs were physically distressing. If we think about our own moments of emotional hurt we know that grief is not just in the mind but can bring a physical intensity as terrible as gall or kidney stones ripping their way through soft tissue.

A poet friend tells me that when he was mad he once tried to claw his way up the bedroom wall in order to convey the degree of physical pain he was enduring. Those watching mis-

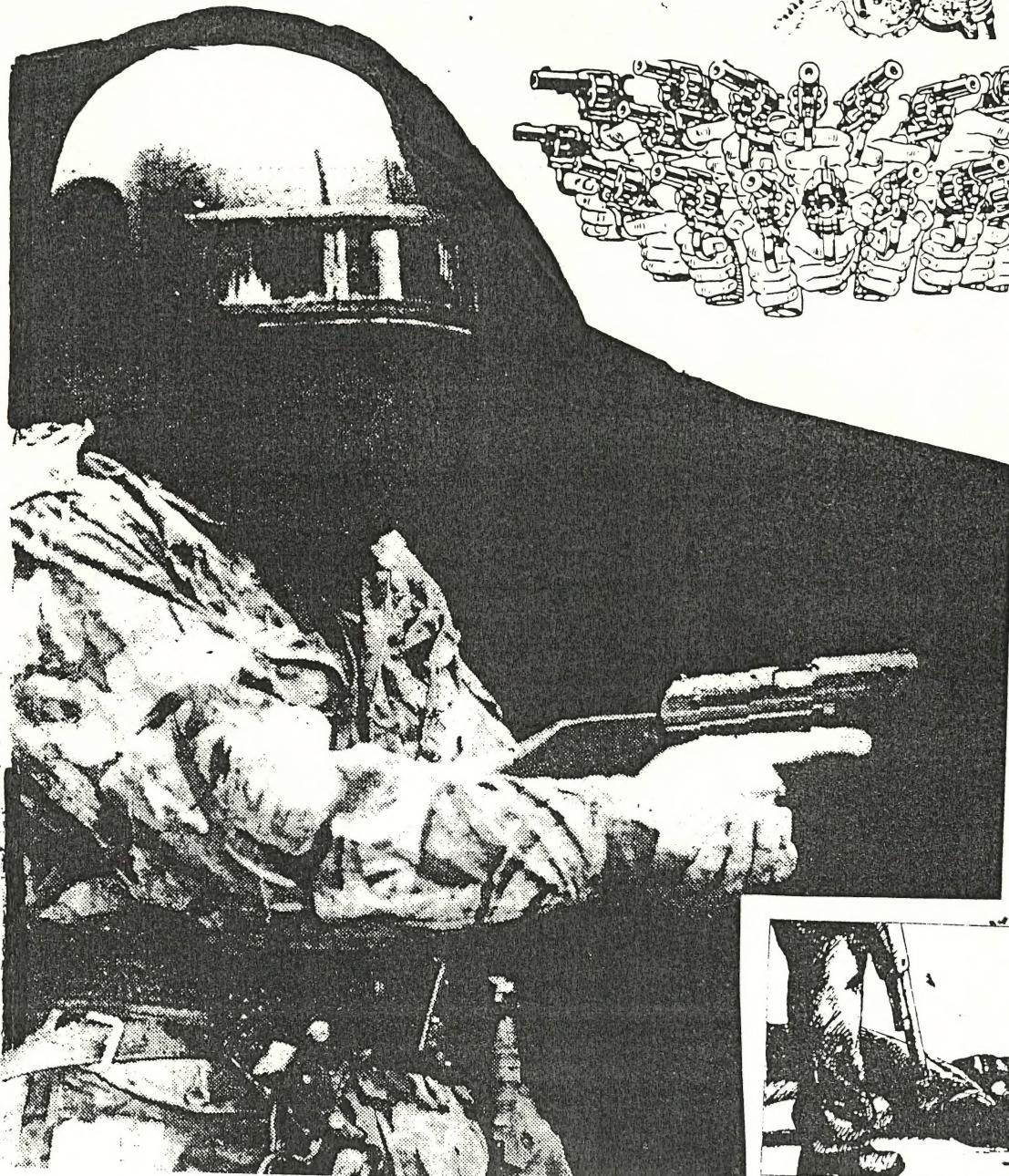
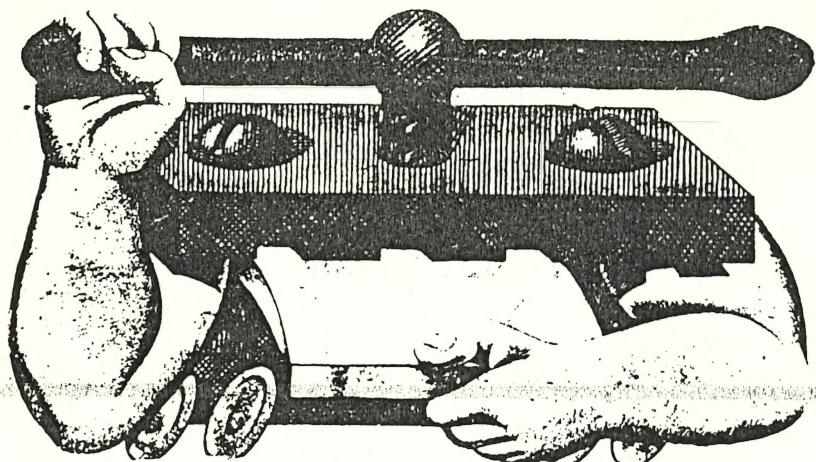
read this action as proof of madness which added to his bodily distress.

A similar intensification of pain has come from the Western intelligentsia's reaction to the attempts to kill Rushdie and ban his book. Genuine pain has been interpreted as madness, or political jockeying.

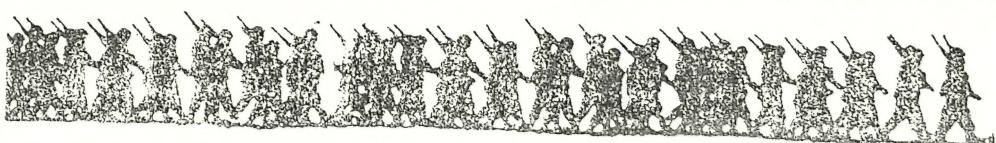
The second aspect of the imagination relates to Rushdie's future writing. His fictions have been savage thoughts, wild and unpredictable. The menace of death could become embedded in his prose, setting up checkpoints and erecting warning lights, even if all possibility of assassination is removed.

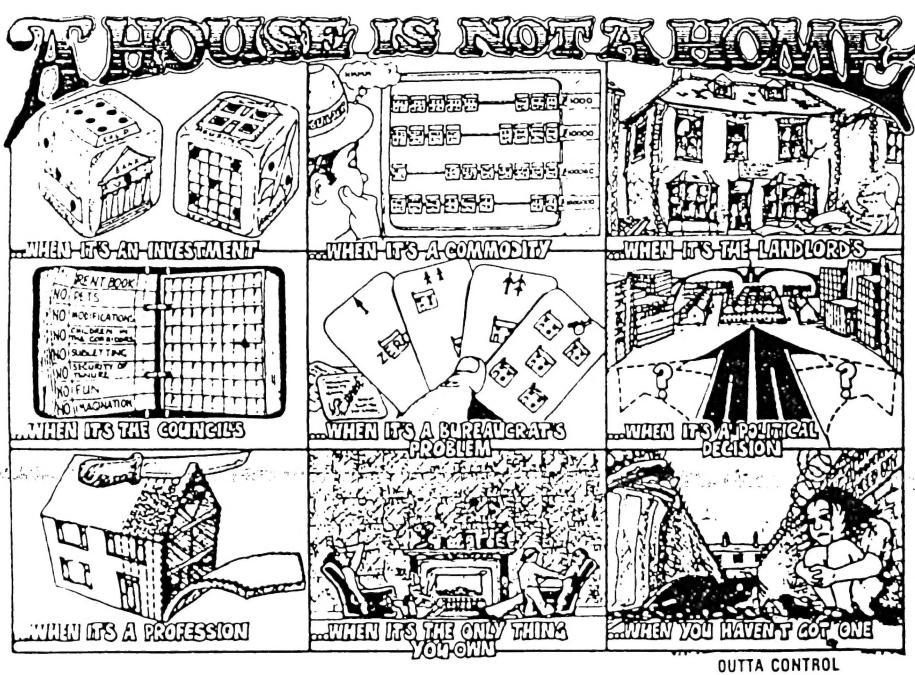
However, these internalised controls again face all western writers who, after a twenty-year period when nothing was forbidden, once more need to be careful. The works of fabulists like Hall and Grenville, Carter and Marquez are potential victims of this return to the normal environment when most great literature has to be refashioned around the censor's desk.





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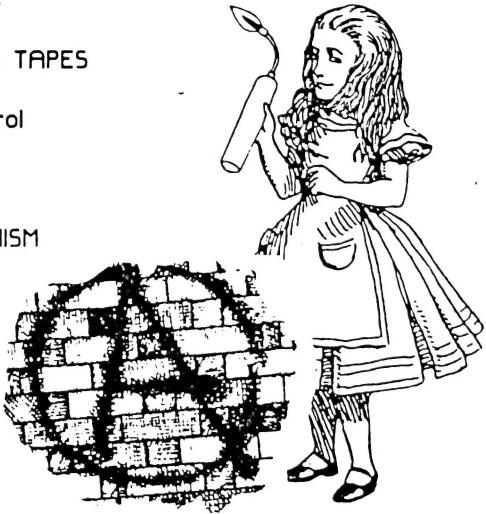
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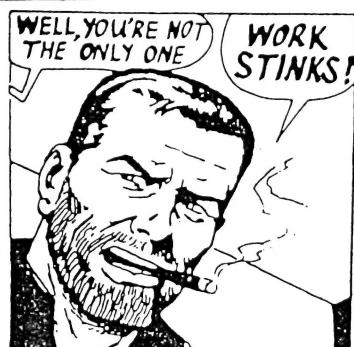
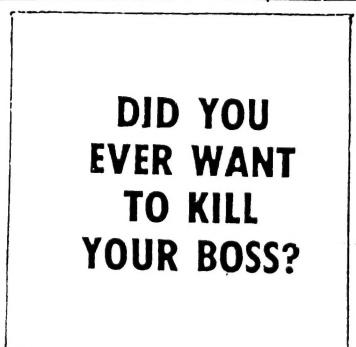
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THE THINGS WE GIVE UP IN ORDER TO WORK ARE NEVER RETURNED

